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CHAUCER'S
CANTERBURY TALES.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.





THE CANTERBURY TALES OF CHAUCER;

WITH AN ESSAY ON HIS LANGUAGE AND VERSIFICATION, AN INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE, NOTES, AND A GLOSSARY BY THO. TYRWHITT, ESQ.



VOL. I.

LONDON:
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CONTENTS OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

	Page
Character of the Sergeant of the Lawe	13
the Frankelein	14
the Haberdasher, Carpenter, Webbe, Deyer, and Tapiser	15
the Coke	16
the Shipman	16
the Doctour of Phisike	17
the Wif of Bathe	19
the Persone	20
the Ploughman	22
the Miller	22
the Manciple	23
the Reve	24
the Sompnour	26
the Pardonere	27
The Knightes Tale	35

THE PREFACE.*

THE first object of this publication was to give the text of THE CANTERBURY TALES as correct as the Mss. within the reach of the Editor would enable him to make it.

The account of former Editions, in the Appendix to this Preface (A), will shew, that this object had hitherto been either entirely neglected, or at least very imperfectly pursued. The Editor therefore has proceeded as if his author had never been published before. He has formed the text throughout from the Mss. and has paid little regard to the readings of any edition, except the two by Caxton, each of which may now be considered as a Manuscript. A List of the Mss. collated, or consulted, upon this occasion is subjoined (B).

In order to make the proper use of these Mss. to unravel the confusions of their orthography, and to judge between a great number of various readings, it was necessary to enquire into the state of our language and versification at the time when Chaucer wrote, and also, as much as was possible, into the

* To the Edition of 1775-8.

must have been a very meagre narration, he has added to this Preface (C) a short ABSTRACT OF THE HISTORICAL PASSAGES OF THE LIFE OF CHAUCER, with remarks, which may serve to separate for the future those passages from others, which have nothing to recommend them to credit, but the single circumstance of having been often repeated.

The GLOSSARY is intended to facilitate the reading of Chaucer, by explaining, in our present language, such of his words and phrases as are now become difficult to be understood, either from a total disuse, or from any smaller alterations of orthography or inflexion. Many of these words and phrases having been already explained in the Notes of this edition, it has been thought sufficient in that case to refer the reader to those Notes. For the rest, it is hoped that this work may be of use in removing some of the most material difficulties, which occur, not only in the Canterbury Tales, but also in the other *genuine* * compositions of Chaucer,

* At the end of this advertisement I shall add a short *Account of* what I conceive to be *the genuine works of Chaucer*, and of those which have been either falsely ascribed to him, or improperly intermixed with his, in the Editions. Those under the two latter descriptions may be of use to illustrate the works of Chaucer, but should not be confounded with them.

as far as the present state of their text makes it safe to attempt any explanation of them.

It would be injustice to the learned author of the Glossary to Mr. Urry's edition*, not to acknowledge, that I have built upon his foundations, and often with his materials. In particular, I have followed, and have endeavoured to improve upon, his example, by constantly citing one or more places in which the word or phrase explained is to be found†. Where the places cited by him were apposite and satisfactory, I have generally spared myself the trouble of hunting for others, with this caution however, that I have not made use of any one of his references without having first verified it by actual inspection; a caution, which every compiler ought to take in all cases, and which in the present case was indispensably necessary, on account of the numerous and gross errors in the text of that edition‡ to which Mr. Thomas's Glossary was adapted.

* Mr. Timothy Thomas. See App. to the Preface. A. n. (*n*).

† The expediency of this practice is obvious. It enables the reader to apprehend more clearly the interpretation of the Glossarist, when right; and it affords him an opportunity of correcting those mistakes, to which we are all so exceedingly liable.

‡ See App. to the Preface, A. p. xix, xx.

For the further prevention of uncertainty and confusion, care has been taken to mark the part of speech to which each word belongs, and to distribute all homonymous words into separate articles*. The numbers, cases, modes, times, and other inflexions of the declinable parts of speech are also marked, whenever they are expressed in a manner differing from modern usage.

Etymology is so clearly not a necessary branch of the duty of a Glossarist, that, I trust, I shall be easily excused for not having troubled the reader with longer or more frequent digressions of that sort. In general, I have thought it sufficient to mark shortly the original language from which each word is probably to be derived, according to the hypothesis, which has been more fully explained in the ESSAY, &c. *Part the second*, that the *Norman-Saxon* dialect, in which Chaucer wrote, was almost

* The neglect of this precaution, and of that just mentioned, has made Mr. Hearne's Glossaries to *Robert of Gloucester* and *Robert of Brunne* of very little use. Who would place any confidence in such interpretations as the following?—R. G. ær. *as, after, before, ere, till.* bet. *better, bid, bad, desired, prayed, be, are.*—P. L. ame. *aim, esteem, love, desire, reckon'd, aim'd, fathom, tell.* bidene. *biting, abiding, tarrying, bidding, praying, bidden, being bidden, being desired, continually, commanded, judged, adjudged, readily.*

entirely composed of words derived from the *Saxon* and *French* languages*.

As every author must be allowed to be the best expositor of his own meaning, I have always endeavoured to establish the true import of any doubtful word or phrase by the usage of Chaucer himself in some other similar passage. Where it has been necessary to call in foreign assistance, recourse has been chiefly had to such authors as wrote before

* A few words are marked as having been taken immediately from the *Latin* language. The number has increased very considerably since the time of Chaucer. It is observable, that the *verbs* of this sort are generally formed from the *participle past*, whereas those which have come to us through France are as generally formed from the *infinitive mode*.

In referring words to the other two great classes, a precise accuracy has not been attempted. The small remains of the genuine *Anglo-Saxon* language, which our lexicographers have been able to collect, do not furnish authorities for a multitude of words, which however may be fairly derived from that source, because they are to be found with little variation in the other collateral languages descended from the *Gothic*. The term SAXON therefore is here used with such a latitude as to include the *Gothic*, and *all its branches*. At the same time, as the *Francic* part of the *French* language had a common original with the *Anglo-Saxon*, it happens that some words may be denominated either FRENCH or SAXON with almost equal probability. In all such cases the final judgment is left to those, who have leisure and inclination (according to our author's phrase, ver. 15246.) *to boult* the matter *to the bren*.

him, or at least were contemporary with him in some part of his life*.

The proper names of persons and places, as they occur in Chaucer, are often either so obscure in themselves, or so disguised by a vitious orthography, that they stand in as much need of an interpreter as the most obsolete appellative. Some other proper names, particularly of authors quoted, though sufficiently known and clear, have been inserted in this Glossary, in order to make it, in that respect, answer the purposes of an Index.

As there are several passages, of which, after all

* Some of these authors have been pointed out in the ESSAY, &c. § VIII. n. 24. Of the others the most considerable are, the author of the *Visions of Pierce Ploughman*, GOWER, OCCLEVE, and LYDGATE.

In the ESSAY, &c. n. 57. a circumstance is mentioned, which shews that the *Visions of Pierce Ploughman* were written after 1350. I have since taken notice of a passage which will prove, I think, that they were written after 1362. The great storm of wind, alluded to in fol. XX. b. l. 14.

And the Southwesterne winde on Satterdaie at even, &c. is probably the storm recorded by Thorn, *inter* X *Script.* c. 2122. Walsingham, p. 178. and most particularly by the Continuator of Adam Murimuth, p. 115.

A.D. M.CCC.LXII.—XV die Januarii, *circa horam vesperarum*, ventus vehemens *notus Australis Africus* tantâ rabie erupit, &c.

The 15th of January in the year 1362, N.S. was a *Saturday*.

my researches, I am unable to give any probable explanation, I shall follow the laudable example of the learned Editor of "*Ancient Scottish Poems* from the MS. of *George Bannatyne*. Edinb. 1770." by subjoining a list of such words and phrases as I profess not to understand. I only wish the reader may not find occasion to think, that I ought to have made a considerable addition to the number.

I will just add, for the sake of those who may be disposed to make use of the Glossary in reading the works of Chaucer not contained in this edition, that it will be found to be almost equally well adapted to every edition of those works, except Mr. Urry's. Mr. Urry's edition should never be opened by any one for the purpose of reading Chaucer.

T. TYRWHITT.

(A) An account of former editions of the Canterbury Tales.

The Art of Printing had been invented and exercised for a considerable time, in most countries of Europe, before the Art of Criticism was called in to superintend and direct its operations. It is therefore much more to the honour of our meritorious countryman, William Caxton, that he chose to make the Canterbury Tales one of the earliest productions of his press, than it can be to his discredit, that he printed them very incorrectly. He probably took the first Ms. that he could procure to print from, and it happened unluckily to be one of the worst in all respects that he could possibly have met with. The very few copies of this Edition, which are now remaining (*a*), have no date, but Mr. Ames supposes it to have been printed in 1475 or 6.

It is still more to the honour of Caxton, that when

(*a*) The late Mr. West was so obliging as to lend me a complete copy of this Edition, which is now, as I have heard, in the King's Library. There is another complete copy in the Library of Merton College, which is illuminated, and has a ruled line under every printed one, to give it the appearance, I suppose, of a Ms. Neither of these books, though seemingly complete, has any Preface or Advertisement.

he was informed of the imperfections of his edition, he very readily undertook a second, "for to satisfy the author," (as he says himself,) "whereas tofore by ignorance *he* had erred in hurting and diffaming his book." His whole account of this matter, in the Preface to this second Edition, is so clear and ingenuous, that I shall insert it below in his own words (*b*). This Edition is also without date, ex-

(*b*) Pref. to Caxton's 2d Edit. from a copy in the Library of St. John's Coll. Oxford. Ames, p. 55.—Whiche book I have dylygently oversen, and duly examyned to the ende that it be made accordyng unto his owen makyng; for I fynde many of the sayd bookes, whiche wryters have abrydgyd it, and many thynges left out, and in some places have sette certayn versys that he never made ne sette in hys booke; of whyche bookes so incorrecte was one broughte to me VI. yere passyd, whiche I supposed had ben veray true and correcte, and accordyng to the same I dyde do enprynte a certayn nomber of them, whyche anon were solde to many and dyverse gentyl men, of whom one gentylman cam to me, and sayd that this book was not according in many places unto the book that Gefferey Chaucer had made. To whom I answered, that I had made it accordyng to my copye, and by me was nothyng added ne mynusshyd. Thenne he sayd, he knewe a book whyche hys fader had and moche lovyd, that was very trewe, and accordyng unto hys owen first book by hym made; and sayd more, yf I wold enprynte it agayn, he wold gete me the same book for a copye. How be it he wyst well that hys fader wold not gladly departe fro it. To whom I said, in caas that he coude gete me suche a book, trewe and correcte, yet I wold ones endevoyre me to enprynte it agayn, for to satisfy the auctour, where as tofore by ygnoraunce I erryd in hurtyng and dyffamyng his book in dy-

cept that the Preface informs us, that it was printed six years after the first.

Ames mentions an Edition of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, "Collected by William Caxton, and printed by Wynken de Worde at Westmestre, in 1495. Folio." He does not appear to have seen it himself, nor have I ever met with any other authority for its existence; which however I do not mean to dispute. If there was such an Edition, we may be tolerably sure, that it was only a copy of Caxton's.

This was certainly the case of both Pynson's Editions. He has prefixed to both the introductory part of Caxton's Prohemye to his 2d Edition, with-

verce places, in setting in somme thynges that he never sayd ne made, and leving out many thynges that he made, whyche ben requysite to be sette in it. And thus we fyll at accord, and he full gentylly gate of hys fader the said book, and delyvered it to me, by whiche I have corrected my book, as heere after alle alonge by the ayde of almighty God shal folowe, whom I humbly beseche, &c.

Mr. Lewis, in his Life of Caxton, p. 104. has published a minute account of the contents of this edition from a copy in the Library of Magdalen College, Cambridge, but without deciding whether it is the first or the second edition.

It is undoubtedly the second; but the Preface is lost. There is an imperfect copy of this edition in the Museum, and another in the Library of the Royal Society. Both together would not make a complete one.

out the least alteration. In what follows, he says, that he purposes to imprint his book [in the first Edition] *by a copy of the said Master Caxton*, and [in the second] *by a copy of William Caxton's imprinting (c)*. That the Copy, mentioned in both these passages, by which Pynson purposed to imprint, was really Caxton's second Edition, is evident from the slightest comparison of the three books. Pynson's first Edition has no date, but is supposed (upon good grounds, I think) to have been printed not long after 1491, the year of Caxton's death. His second Edition (*d*) is dated in 1526, and was

(*c*) See the *Prohemies* to Pynson's 1st and 2d Editt. in the Preface to Urry's Chaucer. There is a complete copy of Pynson's 1st Edit. in the Library of the Royal Society.

(*d*) I venture to call this Pynson's 2d Edit. though Ames (from some notes of Bagford) speaks of Editions in 1520 and 1522. He does not appear to have seen them himself. Mr. West had a copy of the edition of 1526, in which the name of the printer and the date of the impression are regularly set down at the end of the Canterbury Tales. After that follow "*Troilus and Creseide*" and "*the Boke of Fame*," at the end of which last is a note, copied from Caxton's edition of the same book, with this addition. *And here foloweth another of his workes.* But in Mr. West's copy nothing followed. The writer of the Preface to Ed. Urr. seems to have had the use of a copy of this Edition in 1526, which contained some other pieces of Chaucer's, and several by other hands. See the Pref. to Ed. Urr.

the first in which a Collection of some other pieces of Chaucer was added to the Canterbury Tales.

The next Edition, which I have been able to meet with, was printed by Thomas Godfray in 1532. If this be not the very edition which Leland speaks of (*e*) as printed by Berthelette, with the assistance of

(*e*) I think it necessary to state Leland's account of the editions of Chaucer in his own words, from Tanner's *Bibl. Brit.* v. Chaucer. "Non alienum meo erit instituto palam facere, *Gulielmum Caxodunum*, hominem nec indiligentem nec indoctum, et quem constat primum Londini artem exercuisse typographicam, *Chauceri* opera, quotquot vel pretio vel precibus comparare potuit, *in unum volumen collegisse.* Vicit tamen Caxodunicam editionem *Bertholetus* noster operâ *Gulielmi Thynni*, qui multo labore, sedulitate, ac curâ usus in perquirendis vetustis exemplaribus, multa *primæ* adjecit *editioni.* Sed nec in hac parte caruit *Brianus Tucca*, mihi familiaritate conjunctissimus, et Anglicæ linguæ eloquentiâ mirificus, suâ gloriâ, editâ in postremam impressionem *præfatione* elimatâ, luculentâ, eleganti. Sequar igitur codicem *paucis abhinc annis* impressum, et promissum adponam syllabon." He then gives a Syllabus of the works of Chaucer, contained in that Edition, as follows. "*Fabulæ Cantianæ* xxiv, quarum duæ solutâ oratione scriptæ; sed *Petri Aratoris fabula*, quæ communi doctorum consensu Chaucero, tanquam vero parenti, attribuitur, in utrâque editione, quia malos sacerdotum mores vehementer increpavit, suppressa est. *De arte amandi* alias *Romaunce of the Rose*, &c."

Before I make any remarks upon this account, I must observe that it was drawn up by Leland before the year 1540. This appears from his "New Year's gift to Henry VIII in the xxxvii yeare of his raygne" (1 Jan. 1546.) in which he says expressly,

Mr. William Thynne, (as I rather suspect it is,) we may be assured that it was copied from that. Mr.

that he had spent the last six years in travelling about the kingdom, "all his other occupations intermitted" [Ed. 1745. p. xxii. prefixed to Leland's Itin. v. i.]; so that his book *De Viris illustribus*, which he speaks of as finished in the same piece, p. xxi. must have been finished before he set out upon his travels. I will observe too, by the way, that the Biographers of Leland seem to have confounded those last six years travels with his former travels, in execution of the Commission granted to him by Henry VIII. to serche the Libraries of Monasteries, Colleges, &c. That Commission was granted in the year 1533, 25 H. VIII. but how many years he spent in the execution of it, there is no authority, that I can find, for determining with precision.

In the account above quoted, Leland is certainly mistaken in saying that Caxton *collected* the works of Chaucer *into one volume*. He printed two Editions of the Canterbury Tales by themselves, as has been shewn above. He also printed Boethius, Troilus and Cressida, and the Boke of Fame; but each in a separate volume; and some smaller pieces of Chaucer, intermixed with several of Lydgate, &c. in another volume, of which the contents may be seen in Middleton's Dissert. p. 263. n. [*d*]; but it does not appear that he ever attempted to collect these separate publications into one volume.

Leland is also inaccurate, at least, in representing the edition by Thynne as coming next after that by Caxton, without taking any notice of the intermediate editions by Pynson, and especially that in 1526, in which an attempt was really made to collect the works of Chaucer into one volume.

It may appear presumptuous to go further, and to charge him with inaccuracy in his description of that very edition by Thynne, which he seems to have had before his eyes, but I am much in-

Thynne's Dedication to Henry VIII stands at the head of it; and the great number of Chaucer's

clined to suspect, (as I have intimated in the text,) that the edition which he speaks of as printed by Berthelette was really printed by Godfray, and that the Preface of *Briunus Tucca* (Sir Brian Tuke) which he commends so much, was nothing else but the Prefatory address, or Dedication, to the King, which is prefixed to Godfray's and other later editions in the name of Mr. William Thynne. The mistake may not have been so extravagant, as it appears to be at first. It is possible, that Berthelette might be concerned in putting forth the edition of 1532, though it was printed by Godfray; and it is very probable, that the Dedication, (which is in such a style as I think very likely to be commended by Leland,) though standing in the name of Mr. William Thynne, was composed for him by Sir Brian Tuke. Mr. Thynne himself, I apprehend, was rather a lover, than a master, of these studies.

In support of this suspicion I observe 1. that the syllabus, which Leland has given of the contents of Berthelette's edition, agrees exactly enough with the contents of the edition by Godfray, a few small pieces only being omitted by him. 2. The date of Godfray's Edition in 1532 agrees perfectly with what Leland says of the edition in question, (viz. that it was printed *a few years before*,) and with the probable date of Mr. Thynne's edition, which appears to have been published not earlier than 1530, and certainly not later than 1532. It was not published earlier than 1530, because *the French Grammer made by an Englishman*, mentioned in the Dedication, must mean, in all probability, *L'esclaircisement de la langue Françoise* by John Palsgrave, the printing of which was finished by John Hawkins, xviii July, 1530, and the Privilege granted on the 2 September following. It was not later than 1532, because the Dedication appears in Godfray's

works, never before published, which appear in it, fully entitles it to the commendations, which have

edition of that year. 3. If Berthelette had printed Mr. Thynne's edition, in 1531 (we will suppose), it is inconceivable that Godfray should set about another edition so immediately as to be able to publish it the very next year. Though the Printers of that age had a very imperfect notion, I apprehend, of Copy-right at Common Law, they may be presumed to have had always a certain Common Sense, which would restrain them from undertaking a new impression of a book, while a considerable number of copies of a former impression remained unsold, whether those copies belonged to themselves or to others. Besides, Godfray's edition has no appearance of a hasty, piratical impression. It is upon a fine paper, and the types and press-work are remarkably neat and elegant. 4. I think we have Berthelette's own authority for believing that he did not print Mr. Thynne's edition of Chaucer. In the preface to Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, which he published in this very year 1532, after having mentioned *Troylus and Creseyde*, he goes on thus: "The whiche noble warke and many other of the sayde Chausers, that never were before imprinted, and those that very fewe men knewe and fewer hadde them, be now of late put forthe together in a fayre volume." There can be no doubt that in this passage he refers to Mr. Thynne's edition, and if he had printed it himself, I think he would certainly have claimed the honour of it. At the same time, the favourable manner in which he speaks of it, would lead one to imagine, (as has been suggested above,) that he had some concern in it.

Upon the whole therefore I am persuaded, that the edition by Godfray in 1532 is the edition, which Leland speaks of as printed by Berthelette. I have given above what I conjecture to have been the probable grounds of his mistake. But indeed, when we recollect the hurry in which this work of Leland must have been

always been given to Mr. Thynne's edition on that account. Accordingly, it was several times re-

compiled, and that it was left by him unfinished, we need not seek for any other causes of the inaccuracies with which it abounds. In the latter part of the passage cited above, he speaks of *The Ploughman's Tale* by the title of *Petri Aratoris fabula*, confounding it, in the title at least, with *Pierce Ploughman's Visions*. For I do not suppose that he meant to attribute *the Visions* to Chaucer; though in fact the one might as well be attributed to him as the other.

Notwithstanding the immoderate length of this note, I must not suppress another testimony, which may be produced in favour of the existence of an Edition of Chaucer by Mr. Thynne, distinct from that printed by Godfray. Mr. Speght in his Life of Chaucer has the following passage: "M. William Thynn in his first printed booke of Chaucers works with one columbe on a side, had a Tale called the Pilgrims tale, which was more odious to the Clergie, than the speach of the Plowman. The tale began thus: *In Lincolneshire fast by a fenne: Standeth a religious house who doth it kenne.* The argument of which tale, as also the occasion thereof, and the cause why it was left out of Chaucers works, shall hereafter be shewed, if God permit, in M. Fran. Thyns coment upon Chaucer: and the Tale itselfe published *if possibly it can be found.*"

It must be allowed that this description of Mr. Thynne's first edition, "with *one columne on a side*, and *a tale* called *the Pilgrim's tale*," does not suit the edition printed by Godfray, which is in two columns and has no Pilgrim's tale. But I observe, that Mr. Speght does not pretend to have seen this book. He even doubts whether the Tale *can be found*. If therefore I should be able to prove, that the Tale, which he speaks of, could not possibly be in Mr. Thynne's first edition, I presume no great stress will be laid

printed as the standard edition of Chaucer's works, without any material alteration, except the inser-

upon the other part of his evidence, in which he supposes that edition to have been printed with only one columne on a side.

It appears very strange, at first sight, that the Plowman's Tale (according to Leland) should have been suppressed in Mr. Thynne's edition, *quia malos sacerdotum mores vehementer increpavit*, and that he should have inserted this Pilgrim's Tale, which, as Mr. Speght tells us, was still *more odious to the Clergie*. A few years after, when the Reformation was further advanced, in 1542, the Plowman's Tale is inserted among Chaucer's works and the Pilgrim's Tale is suppressed! But there is no occasion to insist upon these little improbabilities. Though Mr. Speght did not know where to find the Pilgrim's Tale, and the Printer of the Edit. in 1687 assures us, that he had searched for it "in the public libraries of both Universities," and also "in all private libraries that he could have access unto," I have had the good fortune to meet with a copy*. It is entitled, "*The Pylgrymse tale*," and begins thus:

In Lincolneshyr fast by the fene·
Ther stant an hows and you yt ken,
And callyd sempynham of religion
And is of an old foundation, &c.

* The copy, of which I speak, is in the black letter, and seems to have once made part of a volume of miscellaneous poems in 8vo. The first leaf is numbered xxxi. and the last xlv. *The Pilgrim's tale* begins about the middle of *fol.* xxxi. *vers.* and continues to the end of the fragment, where it breaks off imperfect. The first leaf has a running title—*Venus The Court of*—and contains the ten last lines of one poem, and another whole poem of twenty lines, before *the Pilgrim's tale*.

This curious fragment was purchased at the Auction of Mr. West's library, in a lot (No *1040) of *Sundry fragments of old black letter books*, by Mr. Herbert of Gulston's Square, who very obligingly permitted me to examine it.

tion of the Plowman's tale in 1542, of which I have spoken in the Discourse, &c. n. 32.

There can be no doubt, I think, that this is the piece of which Mr. Speght had received some confused intelligence. It seems to have been mentioned by *Bale* among Chaucer's works, in the following manner. "*Narrationes diversorum, Lib.* i. *In comitatu Lincolniensi fuit—*" *Script. Brit.* p. 526. Ed. 1559. But it is impossible that any one who had read it should ascribe it to Chaucer. He is quoted in it twice by name, fol. xxxiii. and fol. xlv. and in the latter place the reference seems to be made to a printed book. The reader shall judge.—

He sayd he durst not it disclose,
But bad me reyd the Romant of the Rose,
The thred leafe just from the end,
To *the secund page* ther he did me send,
He prayd me thes vi. stavis for to marke,
Whiche be *Chaucers* awn hand wark.
¶ Thus moche woll our boke sygnify
That while Peter hath mastery, &c.

[Then follow four more lines from Chaucer's R. R. v. 7263—8. Ed. Urr.] It is not usual, at least, to cite Mss. by *the leaf* and *the page*. But if this citation was really made from a printed book, the Pilgrim's tale must have been written after Mr. Thynne's edition, for Chaucer's translation of the Romant of the Rose was first printed in that edition. Another passage will fix the date of this composition still more clearly. In fol. xxxix. xl. are the following lines:

Perkin werbek and Jak straw
And now of late *our cobler* the dawe.

One would not expect to find any mention of *Perkin Warbeck* in a work attributed to Chaucer; but, passing that over, I think it is plain, that *our cobler*, in the second line, means the leader of the Lincolnshire rebels in 1536, who, as Hollinshed tells us, p. 941.

As my business here is solely with the Canterbury Tales, I shall take no notice of the several miscellaneous pieces, by Chaucer and others, which were added to them by Mr. Thynne in his Edition, and afterwards by Stowe and Speght in the Editions of 1561, 1597, and 1602. With respect to the Canterbury Tales, I am under a necessity of observing, that, upon the whole, they received no advantage from the edition of 1532. Its material variations from Caxton's *second* edition are all, I think, for the worse. It confounds the order of the *Squier's* (*f*) and the *Frankelein's* (*g*) tales, which Caxton, in his *second* Edition, had set right. It gives the *Frankelein's* Prologue to the *Merchant*, in addition to his own proper Prologue (*h*). It produces for the first time two Prologues, the one to the *Doctour's*, and the other to the *Shipman's* tale, which are both evidently spurious (*i*); and it brings

" called himself *Captaine Cobler*, but was indeed a monk, named Doctor Mackarell." *The Pilgrim's tale* therefore was not written till *after* 1536, and consequently could not possibly be in Mr. Thynne's first edition, which, as has been shewn above, was printed *at latest* in 1532.

(*f*) See the Discourse, &c. § xxiii. and Note on ver. 10293.

(*g*) See the Discourse, &c. § xxv. and Note on ver. 10985.

(*h*) See the same Section and Note.

(*i*) See them in all the Editt. since 1532.

back the lines of ribaldry (*k*) in the *Merchant's* tale, which Caxton, in his *second* Edition, had rejected upon the authority of his good Ms.

However, this Edition of 1532, with all its imperfections, had the luck, as I have said, to be considered as the standard edition, and to be copied, not only by the Booksellers, in their several Editions (*l*) of 1542, 1546, 1555, and 1561, but also by Mr. Speght, (the first Editor in form, after Mr. Thynne, who set his name to his work,) in 1597 and 1602. In the Dedication to Sir Robert Cecil, prefixed to this last edition, he speaks indeed of having "reformed the whole work, both by old written copies and by Ma. William Thynnes praiseworthy labours," but I cannot find that he has departed in any material point from those editions, which I have supposed to be derived from Mr.

(*k*) See the Note on ver. 10227. The lines themselves are in all the common Editt.

(*l*) There are some other Editions mentioned by Ames, without date, but it is probable that, upon inspection, they would appear to be one or other of the Editions, whose dates are here given. It seems to have been usual to print books in partnership, and for each partner to print his own name to his share of the impression. See Ames, p. 252. A Bible is said to be printed in 1551, by Nicholas Hill—"at the cost and charges of certayne honest menne of the occupacyon, *whose names be upon their bokes.*"

Thynne's. In the very material points abovementioned, in which those editions vary from Caxton's second, he has followed *them*. Nor have I observed any such verbal varieties, as would induce one to believe that he had consulted any good Ms. They who have read his Preface, will probably not regret, that he did not do more towards correcting the text of Chaucer.

In this state the Canterbury Tales remained (*m*) till the edition undertaken by Mr. Urry, which was published, some years after his death, in 1721. I shall say but little of that edition, as a very fair and

(*m*) It may be proper just to take notice, that Mr. Speght's Edition was reprinted in 1687, with an Advertisement at the end, in which the Editor pretended to publish from a Ms. *the Conclusion of* the Coke's Tale *and also of* the Squires Tale, *which in the printed books are said to be lost or never finished by the author.*— These Conclusions may be seen in the Preface to Ed. Urr. Whoever the Editor was, I must do him the justice to say, that they are both really to be found in Ms. The first is in Ms. B. *a.* and the other in Ms. B. *δ.* from which Hearne has also printed it, as a choice discovery, in his letter to Bagford. App. to R. G. p. 601. If I thought the reader had any relish for such supplements to Chaucer, I could treat him from Ms. B. *a.* with at least thirty more lines, which have been inserted in different parts of the *Cook's Tale*, by the same hand that wrote this Conclusion. It seems to have been an early, though very unsuccessful, attempt to supply the deficiencies of that Tale, before any one had thought of tacking *Gamelyn* to it.

full account of it is to be seen in the modest and sensible Preface prefixed to it by Mr. Timothy Thomas (*n*), upon whom the charge of publishing Chaucer devolved, or rather was imposed, after Mr. Urry's death. The strange licence, in which Mr. Urry appears to have indulged himself, of lengthening and shortening Chaucer's words according to his own fancy, and of even adding words of his own, without giving his readers the least notice, has made the text of Chaucer in his Edition by far the worst that was ever published.

Since this there has been no complete Edition of the Canterbury Tales. A volume in 8vo. containing the Prologue and the Knightes Tale, with large ex-

(*n*) I learn this from a Ms. note in an interleaved copy of Urry's Chaucer, presented to the British Museum by Mr. *William Thomas*, a brother, as I apprehend, of Mr. T. Thomas. T. Thomas was of Christ-Church, Oxford, and died in 1751, aged lix. In another note Mr. W. Thomas informs us, that the *Life of Chaucer*, in that edition, was very uncorrectly drawn up by Mr. Dart, and corrected and enlarged by W. T. (i. e. himself.) The same Mr. W. Thomas has taken a great deal of unnecessary pains in collating that copy of Urry's Edit. with several Mss. The best part of the various readings serves only to correct the arbitrary innovations, which Mr. Urry had introduced into the text. He has employed himself to better purpose upon the Glossary, where he has made many emendations and additions, which have been of considerable use in the new Glossary.

planatory notes, &c. was published in 1737, by a Gentleman, (as I am informed,) who has since distinguished himself by many other learned and useful publications. He appears to have set out upon the only rational plan of publishing Chaucer, by collating the best Mss. and selecting from them the genuine readings; and accordingly his edition, as far as it goes, is infinitely preferable to any of those which preceded it.

(B) A List of Mss. collated, or consulted, with the Abbreviations by which they are cited.

In the Museum.

A. Ms. Harl. 7335.
B. Ms. Reg. 18 C. ii. In Urry's List, vii.
C. Ms. Harl. 7334.
D. Ms. Reg. 17 D. xv. In Urry's List, viii.
E. Ms. Harl. 7333.
F. Ms. Harl. 1758. In Urry's List, i.
G. Ms. Sloane. A. 1685. xxii. D. In Urry's List, iii.
H. Ms. Sloane. A. 1686. xxii. D. In Urry's List, iv.
I. Ms. Harl. 1239. In Urry's List, ii.

At Oxford.

In the *Bodleian* Library.

B. α. N° 2527. in the printed Catalogue.
B. β. N° 1234. Ibid.
B. γ. N° 1476. Ibid.
B. δ. N° 3360. Ibid.
B. ε. N° 4138. Ibid.
B. ζ. N° 6420. Ibid.
N C. A. Ms. in the Library of *New College*.

AT CAMBRIDGE.

C. 1. In the Public Library. N° D. d. 4. 24.

C. 2. Ibid. N° I. i. 3. 26.

T. Ms. in the Library of *Trinity College*, N° R. 3. 3.

T t. Ibid. N° R. 3. 15.

Ask. 1. 2. Two Mss. lent to me by the late Dr. Askew. The second has in it the Arms of Henry Deane, Archbishop of Canterbury. 1501—3.

H A. A Ms. lent to me by Edward Haistwell, Esq.

W. A Ms. in the possession of the late Mr. P. C. Webb.

Ch. N. Two Mss. described in the Pref. to Ed. Urr. the one as belonging to Charles Cholmondeley, Esq. of Vale Royal, in Cheshire, and the other to Mr. Norton, of Southwick, in Hampshire. The Editor quotes them from the Collations of Mr. W. Thomas, mentioned above in this APP. A. note (*n*).

Of these Mss. the most credit is certainly due to the five following, viz. A. C. 1. Ask. 1. 2. and H A. The four last exhibit the Tales in exactly the same order in which they are printed in this edition; and so does A. except that it wants the *Cokes* Tale [See the Discourse, &c. § xiii.], and has the *Nonnes* Tale

inserted between the *Sompnoures* and the *Clerkes*. It is also unluckily very imperfect; beginning only at ver. 1204. and ending (with several intermediate breaks) at ver. 12610. in the *Pardoner's* Tale.

N.B. The Editt. of Chaucer by Caxton and Pynson are cited by these abbreviations; Ca. 1. 2. Pyns. 1. 2.—Sp. and Urr. are put for the Editt. by Speght and Urry.—M. stands for the Edit. of *the Prologue and Knight's Tale* in 1737.—The other Editt. are cited by their respective dates. If no date is mentioned, the reference is to the Edit. of 1542 by John Reyne.

(C) An Abstract of the historical passages of the Life of Chaucer.

The Birth of Chaucer in 1328 has been settled, I suppose, from some inscription on his tomb-stone, signifying that he died in 1400, at the age of 72. Of his birth itself we have no memorial, any more than of his parents (*a*). He calls himself a *Londenois*, or *Londoner*, in the *Testament of Love*; B. i. fol. 325. and in another passage, fol. 321. speaks of the city of London as the place of his *engendrure*.

We are more in the dark about the place of his education. In his *Court of Love*, ver. 912. he speaks of himself under the name and character of "Philogenet—*of Cambridge*, Clerk." This is by

(*a*) Mr. Speght has referred to several Records in which the name of Chaucer occurs. There is mention in the *Monast. Ang.* vol. iii. p. 326. of a *Johannes le Chauser, civis Londoniensis*, an. 1299. who may possibly have been our Poet's Grandfather. Though Leland says, that he was *nobili loco natus*, Mr. Speght informs us, that "in the opinion of some heralds—he descended not of any great house, which they gather by his Armes." I am inclined to believe the Heralds, rather than Leland.

The name of *Chaucer* is explained [Life of Ch. Urr.] to signify *a shoe-maker*; but it rather means *un faiseur de chausses ou culottiers*. Dict. de Lacombe, v. *Chaucier*. According to what is said to be the old spelling of it, *Chaucesir*, it might be not improbably derived from *Chaufecire*, an office, which stills subsists under the title of *Chafewax*.

no means a decisive proof that he was really educated at Cambridge; but it may be admitted, I think, as a strong argument that he was not educated at Oxford; as Leland has supposed, without the shadow of a proof(*b*). The Biographers however, instead of weighing one of these accounts against the other, have adopted both; and tell us very gravely, that he was first at Cambridge, and afterwards removed from thence to complete his studies at Oxford.

It were to be wished that Mr. Speght had given us the date of that Record in the Inner Temple, (which he says, a Mr. Buckley had seen,) where "Geffrey Chaucer was fined two shillings for beating a Franciscane frier in Fleet-street (*c*)." Leland

(*b*) The single circumstance, by which Leland has endeavoured to strengthen his supposition that Chaucer was educated at Oxford, is another supposition that he was born in Oxfordshire or Berkshire. The latter has been shewn above to be false.

(*c*) Though this be but a blind story, it rather inclines me to believe that Chaucer was of the Inner Temple *in the early part of his life*, before he went into the service of Edward III. The circumstance recorded is plainly a *youthful* sally. On the contrary, Leland supposes his *principal* residence in the Inns of Court to have been *after* he had *flourished* in France, *about the last years* of Richard II; which is totally incredible. Indeed Leland, through his whole account of our author, seems to have considered him as living at least twenty years later than he really did. He takes no notice of the best authenticated circumstances of Chaucer's

has also told us, that our author "*collegia Leguleiorum frequentavit* after his travels in France, and perhaps before." I must observe, that these travels in France rest entirely upon the authority of Leland, whose account is full of inconsistencies.

The first authentic memorial, which we have of Chaucer, is the Patent in Rymer, 41 E. III. by which the King grants to him an annuity of 20 marks, by the title of *Valettus noster* (*d*). He was then in the

life in the time of Edward III. and he represents him as highly esteemed by Henry IV. and HIS SON, *qui de Gallis triumphavit*. Henry V. was scarcely twelve years of age, when Chaucer died.

(*d*) *Our Yeoman.* Mr. Speght, who omits this grant, mentions one of the same purport in the 45 E. III. in which Chaucer is styled *Valettus Hospitii*, which he translates—*Grome of the Pallace.* By this he sinks our author as much too low as another writer has raised him too high, by translating the same words —*Gentleman of the King's Privy Chamber* [Life of Ch. Urr.]. *Valet*, or *Yeoman*, was the intermediate rank between *Squier* and *Grome.* See the note on ver. 101. See also the Will of Edward Duke of York, *ap. Rymer*, an. 1415. where his legacies *to his menial servants* are thus arranged—a un Escuier L s. a [un] vadlet XX s. a un garc [on...] & a un page VI s. VIII d.

Valettus is probably a corruption of *Vassalettus*, the diminutive of *Vassallus.* Hence this title was also given (not as a name of service) to young men of the highest quality, before they were knighted.

Il ot un fiz de sa mulier,
Ki neit pas uncore chivaler,
Vallet esteit et beaus et gent.— *Roman d'Ipomedon.*

39th year of his age. How long he had served the King in that, or any other, station, and what particular merits were rewarded by this royal bounty (*e*), are points equally unknown.

So that if Edward III. as Mr. Speght says, "did entitle Laurence Hastings, Lord of Aburganey,—*Valectum nostrum*," I should guess, that the said Lord was *not* "the King's grome, page, or servant," as he supposes, or his yeoman, as Chaucer was, but his *Ward*.

(*e*) I should have been glad to have met with any ground for supposing that this mark of Royal favour was a reward of our author's poetical merits. That Chaucer had before this time distinguished himself by his poetical performances, is almost certain. I have mentioned a suspicion [n. on ver. 1920] that the *Assemblee of Foules* alludes to the Courtship of Blanche of Lancaster by John of Gaunt, who married her in 1359, the 33d year of E. III. And perhaps the *Complaint of the Blacke Knight* might be written for John of Gaunt during the same Courtship. It is still more probable that his translation of the *Roman de la Rose* and his *Troilus* were both composed before 1367, the æra of which we are speaking. But I think, if the King had really patronised Chaucer as a Poet, we must have found some clear evidence of such a connection. If the one had been fond of verses, the other would certainly have given him some; especially as he might have exerted his genius in the praise of so illustrious a Patron without any necessity of flattering. If we consider further, that, a few years after, the King appointed him to be Comptroller of the Custom of Wool, &c. in the Port of London, with the following injunction in his Patent,—"*So that the said Geffrey write with his own hand his rolls touching the said office, and continually reside there, and do and execute all things pertaining to the said office in his own proper person and not by his substitute*,"—we shall probably be of

From this time we find frequent mention of him in various public instruments. In the 46 E. III. [*ap. Rymer.*] the King appoints him Envoy, (with two others) to Genoa, by the title of *Scutifer noster* (*f*). In the 48 E. III. he has a grant for Life of a pitcher of wine daily [*ap. Rymer.*]; and in the same year a grant, during pleasure, of the Office of Comptroller of the custom of Wools, &c. in the

opinion, that His Majesty was either totally insensible of our author's poetical talents, or at least had no mind to encourage him in the cultivation or exercise of them. It should seem that Edward, though adorned with many Royal and Heroic virtues, had not the gift of discerning and patronizing a great Poet; a gift, which, like that of genuine Poetry, (if we may believe one, who perhaps spoke feelingly upon the subject,) is only bestowed on the chosen few by the peculiar favour of heaven:

—neque enim, NISI CARUS AB ORTU
DIIS SUPERIS, poterit MAGNO favisse POETÆ.
Milton's MANSUS.

I observe however, that, notwithstanding the petrifying quality, with which these Custom-house accounts might be expected to operate upon Chaucer's genius, he probably wrote his *House of Fame* while he was in that office. I gather this from B. ii. ver. 144. where the Eagle says to him,—

For when thy labour al done is,
And hast made all thy *rekenynges*,
In stede of rest and of newe thynges
Thou goest home to thyne house anone, &c.

(*f*) *Our Squier*; so that in the course of these five years our author had been promoted from the rank of *Yeoman*, to that of *Squier*, attendant upon the King. *Scutifer* and *Armiger*, LAT.

Port of London. [*Ibid.*]. In the 49 E. III. the King grants to him the Wardship of Sir Edmund Staplegate's Heir [Mss. Rymer, E. III. vol. xi. n. 12.], for which he received 104*l.* [Ibid. R. II. vol. i. n. 16.]; and in the next year some forfeited wool to the value of 71*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.* [Life of Ch. Urr.]. In the last year of Ed. III. he was sent to France, with Sir Guichard D'Angle and Richard Stan, [or ***Sturry***], to treat of a marriage between the Prince of Wales, Richard, and a daughter of the French King [Froissart, v. i. ch. 325.].

In the next year, 1 R. II. his annuity of 20 marks was confirmed to him, and another annuity of 20 marks was granted to him in lieu of the pitcher of wine daily. [See the Licence to surrender these grants in the Life of Ch. Urr.]. It is probable too that he was confirmed in his Office of Comptroller, though the instrument has not been produced (*g*).

are synonymous terms for the French *Escuier*. The Biographers thinking, I suppose, the title of *Squier* too vulgar, have changed it into *Shield-bearer*, as if Chaucer had the special office of carrying the King's shield.

Some observations have been made upon this appointment of Chaucer, as Envoy to Genoa, in the Discourse, &c. n. 20.

(*g*) This is probable, I think, because Chaucer, in his Testament of Love, frequently alludes to his loss of Office, as one of the greatest misfortunes brought upon him by his *meddling* in those disturbances, which happened in the city of London in the 7th of R. II. When he fled, to avoid being examined in relation to

In the 11th of R. II. he had the King's Licence to surrender his two grants of 20 marks each in favour of John Scalby (*h*). In the 13th R. II. he appears to have been Clerk of the works at Westminster, &c. and in the following year at Wind-

those disturbances (as he says, Test. of L. fol. 329. b.), he was probably superseded in his office.

(*h*) This Licence, reciting the two grants, is printed in the Life of Ch. Urr. and the author of that life has observed, that this surrender was probably occasioned by our Author's distressed circumstances. Either he despaired of procuring payment of his pensions, or perhaps wanted to raise a sum of ready money. The same writer has extracted from the *Testament of Love* almost all that is now to be known of the history of this distress, which he ascribes very truly to Chaucer's unfortunate engagements with that party in the city of London, of which John of Northampton was at the head. What the real designs of that party were, and how a trifling City-riot, as it seems to have been, came to be treated as a rebellion, are points of great obscurity. There is good ground to believe that Northampton was connected with the Duke of Lancaster. At his trial, in August 1384, he contended, "that he ought not to be tried in the absence of his lord the Duke:" *quo verbo* (says Walsingham, p. 310.) *suscitavit suspicionem sinistram tam vulgi quam procerum contra Ducem.* He was condemned however to perpetual imprisonment; in which he remained till July 1390, when (according to the Monk of Evesham, p. 122.) *ad instantiam Ducis Lancastriæ*, Johannes Northampton—*et socii sui nuper de Londoniis banniti, restituti sunt ad pristinas libertates.* The judgment against him was reversed in Parliament the next year, *Rot. Parl.* 14 R. II. n. 36. and he was restored to his lands, &c. the year following, *Rot. Parl.* 15. R. II. n. 33. This connexion of Northampton with the Duke of Lancaster will account for the part which Chaucer appears to have taken in this unhappy affair.

sor (*i*). In the 17th R. II. the King granted to him a new annuity of twenty pounds [*ap. Rymer.*] (*k*);—in the 21st, his Protection for two years [*Ibid.*];—and in the 22d, a pipe of wine annually [*Ibid.*]. In the next year, the 1st H. IV. his two grants, of the

He was very early attached to that Duke, and was at this time married to a sister of Catharine Swinford, the Duke's mistress; and it is observable, that the first mark of royal favour, which he received after his distresses, was bestowed upon him at the same time that Northampton received his pardon, and probably through the same mediation.

(*i*) See Tanner's Bib. Brit. v. CHAUCER, n. e. It may justly be doubted whether these two offices together indemnified our author for the loss of his former office in the Customs. That was probably a very lucrative one. He complains of "being berafte out of dignitie of Office, in which he made a gatheringe of worldly godes;" and in another place he speaks of himself as "once glorious in worldly welefulnesse, and having suche godes in welthe as maken men riche." [Test. of L. fol. 326. a. b.]. But that he should ever have been possessed of "lands and revenues to the yearly value almost of a thousand pounds," (according to the tradition repeated by Mr. Speght,) is quite incredible.

(*k*) If Chaucer was ever possessed of Dunnington-castle in Berkshire, (as his Biographers suppose he was,) he must have purchased it about this time; for it appears to have been in the possession of Sir Richard Abberbury in the 16th year of R. II. *Monast. Ang.* ii. 474. We have no proof of any such purchase, and the situation of his affairs makes it highly improbable. The tradition, which Mr. Evelyn mentions in his *Sylva*, of an oak in Dunnington-park called *Chaucer's oak*, may be sufficiently accounted for without supposing that it was planted by Chaucer himself, as the Castle was undoubtedly in the hands of Thomas Chaucer for many years.

annuity of 20*l.* and of the pipe of wine, were confirmed to him [Mss. Rymer, H. IV. vol. i. n. 27.], and at the same time he had an additional grant of an Annuity of 40 Marks. [*Ibid.* n. 15]. He died, according to the inscription on his tomb-stone, in the beginning of the 2 H. IV. on the 25th of October, 1400.

These, I think, are the principal facts in Chaucer's life, which are attested by authentic evidences (*l*).

(*l*) It appears further from the *Eritus, Pasch.* 4 R. II. [Mss. Rymer, R. II. vol. ii. n. 3.] that Chaucer, on the 24 May, 1381, received at the Exchequer a half-year's payment of his own two annuities of 20 marks each, and also a half-year's payment of an annuity of 10 marks, granted by E. III. and confirmed by R. II. to his *wife* Philippa, *nuper uni domicellarum Philippæ, nuper Reginæ Angliæ.* The title given to her of *domicella* proves that she was unmarried at the time of her being in the Queen's service. There is a Patent in Rymer, 43 E. III. by which the King, about four months after Queen Philippa's death, grants annuities to nine of her *Domicellæ*, viz. to four of them 10 marks, to two 5 pounds, and to three 5 marks. One of them is called *Philippa Pykard*, and might very well be supposed to be the lady whom Chaucer afterwards married, if it were not for two objections, 1. that the annuity granted to her is only 5 pounds, whereas Chaucer's wife appears by this record to have had one of 10 marks; and 2. that the Historians, though they own themselves totally ignorant of the Christian name of Chaucer's wife, are all agreed that her surname was *Rouet*, the same with that of her father and eldest sister, Catharine Swynford. The first objection might be got over by supposing that her annuity, though at first only 5 pounds, was encreased (perhaps upon her marriage with Chaucer) to 10 marks.

We learn from himself, in his *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, that he had a son, called *Lowis*, who was ten years of age in 1391. It is the only circumstance, as I recollect, relating to his family, of which he has informed us. A few other historical particulars relating to himself, which may be collected from his writings, have been taken notice of already; and perhaps a more attentive examination of his works might furnish a few more. We

As to the other point, it is not impossible that the father, and the eldest sister, who was his *heiress* [See Pat. 13 H. IV. p. 1. m. 35. *ap. Rymer.*], might bear the name of *de Rouet*, (or *de Roelt*, as it is in the Pat. 13 H. IV. just quoted,) from some estate in their possession, and yet the younger Sister might be called by the family-name of *Pykard*.

If the records of payments at the Exchequer for the eleven years preceding 1381 are still in being, they may enable us to clear up these doubts, and also, perhaps, to ascertain very nearly the time of Chaucer's marriage, as they will probably shew when he began to receive his wife's annuity. If this last point were ascertained, we should know better what to think of the relation of Thomas Chaucer to our author. Mr. Speght informs us, "that some held opinion, that Thomas C. was not the sonne of Geffrey," and there are certainly many circumstances which might incline us to that opinion. I was in hopes of meeting with some light upon this subject in a Poem which Lydgate is said to have written, entitled, "A Complaint upon the departure of Thomas Chaucer into France, upon the Kynges Ambassate." A Poem, with this title, is extant in Ms. *Harl.* 367. 33. in the hand-writing of J. Stowe; but upon inspection I found it to be a mere love-ballad, without the least imaginable reference to Thomas Chaucer.

must be cautious however, in such an examination, of supposing allusions which Chaucer never intended, or of arguing from pieces which he never wrote, as if they were his. We must not infer from his repeated commendations of the Daysie-flower, that he was specially favoured by Margaret, Countess of Pembroke (*m*); and still less should we set

(*m*) I can find no other foundation for this notion. Mr. Speght, who first started it, says, that "it may appeare in divers treatises by him written: as *in the Prologue of the Legend of good Women* under the name of the Daysie; and likewise *in a Ballad*, beginning, *In the season of Feverier*." The Ballad is among the additions made by John Stowe to Chaucer's works in 1561, and, like the greatest part of those additions, is *of very dubious authority*, to use the gentlest terms. But supposing it genuine, there is nothing in it to make us believe that it had any reference to the Countess of Pembroke. That its commendations of the Daysie ought not to weigh with us is very plain from the other piece cited by Mr. Speght: for the *Legende of good Women*, in which he imagines "the Lady Margaret to be honoured under the name of the Daysie," was certainly not written till at least twelve years after that Lady's death. [See the Discourse, &c. n. 3. for the date of the *Legende*. The Countess *Margaret* must have died not later than 1370, as the Earl's son, by his second wife *Anne*, was about nineteen years of age, when he was killed in a tournament in 1391, Hollinshed, p. 471.] It is possible that *le dit de la fleur de lis et de la Marguerite* by *Guillaume de Machaut* [Acad. des. Insc. t. xx. p. 381.] and the *Dittié de la flour de la Margherite* by *Froissart* [Ibid. t. x. p. 669.], (neither of which had the least relation to the Countess of Pembroke,) might furnish us with the true key to those mystical compliments, which our poet has paid to the Daysie-flower.

him down as a *follower* of Alain Chartier (*n*), because his Editors have falsely ascribed to him a translation of one of Alain's poems.

(*n*) Leland was the first author of this story, which is totally inconsistent with Chronology. The time of Alain's birth has not been settled with precision; but he was certainly living near 50 years after Chaucer's death; which makes it morally impossible that the latter should have *followed* him, in his attempts to polish his native language. Instead therefore of supposing from the translation of *La belle dame sans mercie* that Chaucer imitated Alain Chartier, we should rather conclude, that he was not the author of that translation; which indeed in Ms. *Harl.* 372. is expressly attributed to a *Sir Richard Ros.*

I will just take notice of another opinion, (which has been propagated upon as little foundation,) that Chaucer imitated the Provençal poets. Mr. Rymer, who, I believe, first made the discovery, speaks only of his having borrowed from their *language* [View of Trag. p. 78.], but Mr. Dryden found out, that he composed *after their manner*, particularly his tale of *the Flower and the Leaf*. [Pref. to Fables]. Mr. Warton also thinks, that *the House of Fame* "was originally a Provencial composition." [Hist. of English Poetry, p. 389. 458.]

How far Chaucer's *language* was borrowed, has been considered in the Essay, &c. Part i. I will only add, that I have not observed in any of his writings a single phrase or word, which has the least appearance of having been fetched by him from the South of the Loire. With respect to the *manner* and *matter* of his compositions, till some clear instance of imitation be produced, I shall be slow to believe that in either he ever copied the poets of Provence, with whose works, I apprehend, he had very little, if any, acquaintance.



FROM A M.S. OF ROCCLEVES POEMS IN THE HARLEIAN LIBRARY.

Published by W. Pickering & H.& S. Prowett London 1828.

An Account of the Works of Chaucer to which the Glossary is adapted; and of those other Pieces which have been improperly intermixed with his in the Editions.

Of the Canterbury Tales, the greatest work of Chaucer, it is needless to repeat what has been said in different parts of this Edition; particularly in the *App. to the Preface*, A. and also in the *Introductory Discourse*. One of the earliest of his other works was probably

I. The Romaunt of the Rose. He speaks of it himself in L W. 329. and 441. It is professedly a translation of the French *Roman de la Rose*, and many gross blunders in the printed text may be corrected by comparing it with the Original. Dr. Hunter was so obliging as to lend me a MS. of this poem (the only one that I have ever heard of), which has occasionally been consulted to good advantage; but it does not supply any of the most material defects of the printed Editions. See Vol. IV. p. 343.

II. Troilus and Creseide, in V. Books. This Poem is also mentioned by our author in L W. 332

and 441. It is for the most part a translation of the *Filostrato* of Boccace; but with many variations, and such large additions, that it contains above 2700 lines more than its original. See the Essay, &c. n. 62. and Vol. IV. p. 340.

There are several Mss. of this poem in the Bodleian library and in the Museum, which have been occasionally consulted.

III. THE COURT OF LOVE was first printed among the additions made to Chaucer's works by John Stowe, in the Edition of 1561. One might reasonably have expected to find it mentioned in L W. *loc. cit.* but notwithstanding the want of that testimony in its favour, I am induced by the internal evidence to consider it as one of Chaucer's genuine productions. I have never heard of any Ms. of this poem.

IV. THE COMPLAINT OF PITEE. So this Poem is entitled in Ms. *Harl.* 78. It is extant also in Ms. *Bodl.* Fairf. 16. The subject is alluded to in the *Court of Love*, ver. 700. seq.

V. OF QUENE ANNELIDA AND FALSE ARCITE, with the COMPLAINT OF ANNELIDA. The storie of this poem is said in ver. 10. to have been originally in Latin; and in ver. 21. Chaucer names the authors whom he professes to follow. "*First folwe*

I STACE *and after him* CORINNE." As the opening only is taken from Statius, [L. IV. v. 519.] we must suppose that *Corinne* furnished the remainder; but who *Corinne* was is not easy to guess. [See the Gloss. in v. CORINNE.] It should be observed, that the *Arcite*, whose infidelity is here complained of, is quite a different person from the *Arcite* of the *Knightes tale*; from which circumstance we may perhaps be allowed to infer, that this poem was written before Chaucer had met with the Theseida.

It is extant in Mss. *Harl.* 372. and *Bodl.* Fairf. 16.

VI. THE ASSEMBLEE OF FOULES is mentioned by Chaucer himself in L W. 419. under the title of "*The Parlement of foules.*" In Ms. *Bodl.* Fairf. 16. it is entitled "*The Parlement of Briddes.*"

The opening of this poem is built upon the *Somnium Scipionis* of Cicero, as it appears at the head of Macrobius's commentary. The description of a *Garden* and *Temple*, from ver. 183 to ver. 287, is almost entirely taken from Boccace's description of the Temple of Venus in the VII book of the Theseida. See the n. on ver. 1920. I have found no reason to retract the suspicion there intimated as to the date of this poem; nor can I confirm it by any external evidence.

VII. THE COMPLAINT OF THE BLACK KNIGHT, in Mss. *Bodl.* Fairf. 16. and Bod. 638. is entitled "*Complaint of a lover's life.*" I do not wish much confidence to be given to the conjecture, in App. to the Pref. C. n. (*e*) that this poem relates to John of Gaunt.

VIII. CHAUCER'S A. B. C. was first printed in Mr. Speght's 2d Edit. in 1602. It is said, in the title, to have been composed *at the request of the Duchesse Blanche.* If that be true, it ought to be placed before.

IX. THE BOOKE OF THE DUCHESSE, which Chaucer himself has mentioned by the title of "*The deth of Blaunche the Duchesse.*" L W. 418. See an account of this poem in the n. on ver. 4467. and Vol. IV. p. 341.

X. THE HOUSE OF FAME is mentioned by Chaucer himself in L W. 417. It was probably written while he was comptroller of the custom of wools, and consequently not earlier than 1374. See the passage from B. II. quoted in the App. to the Pref. C. n. (*e*). It is extant in Mss. *Bodl.* Fairf. 16. and Bod. 638.

XI. CHAUCER'S DREME was first printed in Mr. Speght's Edit. of his works in 1597. Bale seems to speak of it under the title, "*De castello*

dominarum. Lib. i." The supposed plan of this poem, prefixed to it by Mr. Speght, is a mere fancy; but there is no ground for doubting the authenticity of the poem itself.

When I imagined that a passage in this Dreme [ver. 1820—1926.] was probably copied from the *Lay of Elidus* [Discourse, &c. n. 24.], I did not recollect, that the incident there related is very similar to one in the Grecian fabulous history [See Hyginus, fab. CXXXVI. *de Polyido.*], and therefore might easily have come to Chaucer through some other channel.

XII. THE FLOUR AND THE LEFE was also printed for the first time in the Edit. of 1597; but I do not think its authenticity so clear as that of the preceding poem. The subject, at least, is alluded to by Chaucer in L W. 188—194.

XIII. THE LEGENDE OF GOODE WOMEN is extant in Mss. *Bodl.* Arch. Seld. B. 24. and Fairf. 16. For the time of its composition see the Discourse, &c. n. 3. See also the n. on ver. 4481. An additional argument, for believing that the number intended was *nineteen*, may be drawn from the *Court of Love*, ver. 108. where, speaking of *Alceste*, Chaucer says—

" To whom obeyed *the ladies gode ninetene.*"

XIV. THE COMPLAINT OF MARS AND VENUS is said, in the conclusion, to have been translated from the French of *Graunson;* probably that *Otho de Graunson*, who was retained in the military service of Richard II, with an annuity of 200 marks. [Pat. 17 R. II. p. 1. m. 6. ap. Rymer.] Mr. Speght mentions a tradition (if I understand him right) that this poem was originally made of the Lady *Elizabeth*, daughter to *John of Gaunt*, (whom he calls *King of Spaine*,) and her husband the Lord *John Holland*, half-brother to Richard II. I cannot see any thing in the poem itself that countenances this particular notion, though I have little doubt, that it was intended to describe the situation of *some* two lovers under a veil of mystical allegory.

This poem is extant in Mss. *Bodl.* Arch. Seld. B. 24. and Fairf. 16. In Ms. *Harl.* 7333. it is entitled "*The broche of Thebes as of the love of Mars and Venus;*" which inclines me to believe, that it is the poem, mentioned by Lydgate, and from him by Bale, which has of late been supposed to be lost. Lydgate's words are—

> Of *Anuelida* and of false *Arcite*
> He made a *complaynt* dolefull and piteous,
> And of *the broche* which that *Vulcanus*
> At *Thebes* wrought, full divers of nature.
>
> Prol. to *Trag.* Sign. A. ii. b.

From this passage Bale, as I suppose, deceived by the ambiguous sense of the word *broche*, has attributed to Chaucer a poem "*De Vulcani veru*;" Of Vulcan's *spit*. He should have said "*De Vulcani gemmâ*," or "*monili*." See BROCHE in the Glossary.

This *broche of Thebes*, from which the whole poem is here supposed to have taken its title, is described at large in the *Complaint of Mars*, ver. 93—109. The *first idea* of it seems to have been derived from what Statius has said of the *fatal necklace* made by *Vulcan* for Harmonia. Theb. II. 265—305. Lydgate refers us to *Ovide*; but I cannot find any thing in him upon the subject.

XV. THE CUCKOW AND THE NIGHTINGALE in Ms. Fairf. 16. is entitled "*The boke of Cupide God of Love*." It is extant also in Ms. Bod. 638. and as far as ver. 235. in Arch. Seld. B. 24. and might be much improved and augmented with some lines from those Mss. The Ballade of three Stanzas with an Envoye, which seems to belong to this poem in the Editt. does not appear at all in Ms. Bod. 638. In Ms. Fairf. 16. it is at the end of the *Booke of the Duchesse*. I cannot believe that it was written by Chaucer.

Beside these more considerable works it appears

from L W. 422. 430. that our author had composed many "*balades, roundels, virelayes;*" that he had "*made many a lay and many a thing.*" A few pieces of this sort are still extant, but hardly any, I think, of so early a date as the Legende. I will set them down here as they stand in the Editt.

1. *L'envoy de Chaucer à Bukton.* Beginning,

My maister Bukton, whan of Christ, &c.

So this little poem is entitled in Ms. Fairf. 16. It has always been printed at the end of the *Booke of the Duchesse*, with an &c. in the first line instead of the name of *Bukton;* and in Mr. Urry's Edit. the following most unaccountable note is prefixed to it. "This seems an Envoy to the Duke of *Lancaster* after his loss of *Blanch.*"

From the reference to the *Wife of Bathe*, ver. 29. I should suppose this to have been one of our author's later compositions, and find that there was a *Peter de Buketon*, the King's Escheator for the County of York, in 1397, [Pat. 20. R. II. p. 2. m. 3. ap. Rymer.] to whom this poem, from the familiar style of it, is much more likely to have been addressed than to the Duke of Lancaster.

2. *Balade sent to King Richard.*

Beginn. *Sometime the world,* &c.

So this poem is entitled in Ms. Harl. E. It is

extant also in Fairf. 16. and in Cotton. Otho. A. XVIII.

3. *Balade* beginning—*Fle fro the prese*, &c. In Ms. Cotton. Otho. A. XVIII. this balade is said to have been made by Chaucer "*upon his death-bed, lying in his anguish;*" but of such a circumstance some further proof should be required. It is found, without any such note, in Ms. Arch. Seld. B. 24. and Fairf. 16.

4. *Balade of the village.*

Beginn. *This wretched worldes*, &c.

It is extant in Ms. Fairf. 16. and Bod. 638. In Ashmol. 59. it is said to have been *translated from the French.* Tanner, in v. CHAUCER.

5. *L'Envoy de Chaucer à Skogan.*

Beginn. *Tobroken ben the Statutes*, &c.

So this poem is entitled in Ms. Fairf. 16. Among a number of people of all sorts, who had letters of protection to attend Richard II. upon his expedition to Ireland in 1399, is *Henricus Scogan, Armiger.* This jocose expostulation was probably addressed to him by our author some years before, when Scogan's interest at court may be supposed to have been better than his own.

6. *Chaucer to his emptie purse.*

Beginn. *To you, my purse*, &c.

This balade is extant in Ms. Fairf. 16. and in Cotton. Otho. A. XVIII. The *Envoy* appears to be addressed to Henry the 4th.

7. Balade beginning—*The firste stock*, &c.

These three Stanzas have been preserved in a "*Moral Balade by Henry Scogan;*" of which some notice will be taken below.

8. *Proverbes by Chaucer.*

Beginn. *What shal these clothes*, &c.

So this little piece is entitled in Ms. Harl. 7578. It evidently contains *two* distinct *Proverbs*, or *Moral admonitions.*

9. *Chaucer's wordes to his Scrivenere.*

Beginn. *Adam Scrivenere*, &c.

A proof of his attention to the correctness of his writings. See also T. V. 1794, 5.

The works of Chaucer in prose are,

I. A TRANSLATION OF BOETHIUS *de consolatione Philosophiæ*, which he has mentioned himself in L W. ver. 425.

II. A TREATISE ON THE ASTROLABE, addressed to his son *Lowis*, in 1391. It is plain from what is said at the beginning of this treatise, that the printed copies do not contain more than two of the five parts, of which it was intended to consist.

III. THE TESTAMENT OF LOVE is evidently an imitation of Boethius *de consolatione Philosophiæ*. It seems to have been begun by our author after his troubles, in the middle part of the reign of Richard II. and to have been finished about the time that Gower published his *Confessio Amantis*, in the 16th year of that reign. At least it must then have been far advanced, as Gower mentions it by its title. *Conf. Am.* 190 b.

The foregoing I consider as the genuine works of Chaucer. Of those which have been improperly intermixed with his in the Editions, the following are known to be the works or other authors.

1. *The Testament and Complaint of Creseide* appears from ver. 41. not to have been written by Chaucer; and Mr. Urry was informed "by Sir James Erskine, late earl of Kelly, and divers aged scholars of the Scottish nation," that the true author was "Mr. ROBERT HENDERSON, chief School-master of Dumferlin, a little time before Chaucer was first printed, and dedicated to King Henry VIII. by Mr. Thynne." I suppose, the same person is meant that is called ROBERT

HENRYSONE in "*Ancient Scottish Poems*," where several of his compositions may be seen, from p. 98 to p. 138.

2. *The floure of Courtesie* is said, in the title, to have been *made by* JOHN LYDGATE.

3. *La belle dame sans mercie*, a translation from Alain Chartier, is attributed in Ms. *Harl.* 372. to Sir RICHARD ROS. See App. to the Pref. C. n. (*n*). Upon looking further into Alain's works, I find a Balade upon the taking of Fougieres by the English in 1448 [*Oeuvres d'Al. Chartier*, p. 717.]; so that he was certainly living near *fifty* years after Chaucer's death; which makes it quite incredible that the latter should have translated any thing of his.

4. *The letter of Cupide* is dated in 1402, two years after Chaucer's death. It was written by THOMAS OCCLEVE, who mentions it himself, as one of his own compositions, in a *Dialogue* which follows his *Complaint*. Ms. *Bodl.* 1504.

> "Yes, *Thomas*, yes, in the *epistle of Cupide*
> Thou hast of hem so largelich seid."

5. JOHN GOWER *unto the noble King Henry the 4th*, with some Latin verses of the same author.

6. *Sayings of* DAN JOHN [LYDGATE].

7. SCOGAN *unto the lordes and gentlemen of the Kynges house.*

So the title of this poem is expressed in the old Editt. but, according to Mr. Speght, *in the written copies* it is thus: "Here followeth a moral balade to the *Prince*, the Duke of *Clarence*, the Duke of *Bedford*, the Duke of *Glocester*, the King's sonnes; by *Henry Scogan*, at a supper among the Marchants in the Vintry at London in the house of *Lewis John*." This cannot be quite accurate; as neither of the two younger sons of Henry IV. had the title of *Duke* while their eldest brother was *Prince;* but I find that there was, about that time, a *Lewis John*, a Welshman, who was naturalized by act of Parliament, 2 H. V. and who was concerned with Thomas Chaucer in the execution of the office of Chief Butler. *Rot. Parl.* 2 H. V. n. 18. The same person, probably, was appointed Remitter of all monies that should be sent to Rome for three years, ap Rymer. *an. eodem.*

The article concerning Skogan in Tanner's Bibl. Brit. is a heap of confusion. He is there called *John;* is said to have been a *Master of arts* of

Oxford and *jester* to K. Edward VI. (perhaps a misprint for IV); to have been contemporary with Chaucer, and famous in the year 1480. In a collection of foolish stories, which is supposed to have been first published by Dr. Andrew Borde, in the time of Henry VIII. under the title of *Scogan's jests*, he is called *Thomas*; and there too he is represented as a Graduate, I think, of Oxford, and as jester to some King, but without any circumstances sufficient to determine what King is meant.

I am inclined to believe that the Scogan, who wrote this poem, is rightly named *Henry* in Mr. Speght's Ms. As to the two circumstances of his having been a *Master of arts* of Oxford and *jester* to a King, I can find no older authority for either than Dr. Borde's book. That he was contemporary with Chaucer, but so as to survive him for several years, perhaps till the reign of Henry V. is sufficiently clear from this poem.

Shakespeare seems to have followed the jest-book, in considering Scogan as a mere buffoon, when he mentions, as one of Falstaff's boyish exploits, that he "broke Scogan's head at the Court-gate;" [2d Part of Henry IV. A. 3.] but Jonson

has given a more dignified, and, probably, a juster account of his situation and character. *Masque of the Fortunate Isles.* Vol. VI. p. 192.

> *Mere-fool.* Skogan? what was he?
> *Johphiel.* O, a fine gentleman and master of arts
> Of Henry the fourth's time, that made disguises
> For the king's sons, and writ in ballad-royal
> Daintily well.
> *Mere-fool.* But wrote he like a gentleman?
> *Johphiel.* In rhime, fine tinkling rhime and flowand verse,
> With now and then some sense; and he was paid for't,
> Regarded and rewarded; which few poets
> Are now a-days.

This description of Skogan corresponds very well with the ideas which would naturally be suggested by the perusal of the poem before us, and of that addressed to him by Chaucer. See above, p. xv. And indeed I question whether Jonson had any other good foundation for what he has said of him.

8. *A balade of goode counseil, translated out of Latin verses into English, by* DAN JOHN LYDGATE.

9. *A balade made in the preise, or rather dispreise, of women for their doubleness;* by LYDGATE, according to Ms. Ashmol. 6943.

10. *A balade warning men to beware of deceitful women;* by LYDGATE, according to Ms. Harl. 2251.

To these, which are known to be the works of other authors, we should perhaps add an 11th, viz. *Balade in commendation of our Ladie;* as a poem with the same beginning is ascribed to LYDGATE, under the title of "*Invocation to our Lady.*" Tanner, in v. LYDGATE.

The anonymous compositions, which have been from time to time added to Chaucer's in the several Editt. seem to have been received, for the most part, without any external evidence whatever, and in direct contradiction to the strongest internal evidence. Of this sort are "*The Plowman's tale,*" first printed in 1542; [See the Discourse, &c. § XL. n. 32.]. "*The Story of Gamelyn*" and "*The Continuation of the Canterbury Tales,*" first printed in Mr. Urry's Edition; "*Jack Upland*" first produced by Mr. Speght in 1602. I have declared my suspicion [in the Gloss. v. ORIGENES] that the "*Lamentation of Marie Magdalene*" was not written by Chaucer; and I am still clearer that the "*Assemblee of ladies,*" "*A praise of women,*" and the "*Remedie of love,*" ought not to be imputed to him. It would be a waste of time to sift accurately the heap of rubbish, which was added, by John Stowe, to the Edit. of 1561. Though we might perhaps be able to pick out two

or three genuine fragments of Chaucer, we should probably find them so soiled and mangled*, that he would not thank us for asserting his claim to them.

* As a specimen of the care and discernment, with which Mr. Stowe's collections were made, I would refer the curious reader to what is called a *Balade*, fol. 324 b. Ed. Sp.

Beginn. *O merciful and o merciable.*

The first four stanzas are found in different parts of an imperfect poem upon the *Fall of man*. Ms. Harl. 2251. n. 138. The 11th Stanza makes part of a *Envoy*, which in the same Ms. n. 37. is annexed to the poem entitled "*The craft of Lovers*" [among the Additions to Chaucer's works by J. Stowe]; which poem (by the way), though printed with a date of 1347, and ascribed to Chaucer, has in the Ms. a much more probable date of 1459, near sixty years after Chaucer's death.

There is one little piece, perhaps by Chaucer [fol. 224. Ed. Sp.].

Beginn. *Alone walking, In thought plaining*, &c.

which comes nearer to the description of a *Virelay*, than any thing else of his that has been preserved. See the book quoted in the Gloss. v. *Virelaye*.

An Essay on the Language and Versification of Chaucer.

THE CONTENTS.

Introduction. The different judgments of the Language and Versification of Chaucer stated. Plan of this Essay, in three Parts. 1. To vindicate Chaucer from the charge of having corrupted the English Language by too great a mixture of French with it. 2. To make some observations upon the real state of our language in his time. 3. To apply those observations and others towards illustrating the real nature of his Versification.

Part the First. § I. The French Language introduced into England before the Conquest; § II. confirmed and propagated by the new establishments at the Conquest; § III. was the ordinary language of the Court; § IV. was carried into the Provinces by the great Barons and military Commanders; § V. and especially by the Clergy; § VI. who, both Secular and Regular, were chiefly foreigners; § VII. The French Language continued to be much used as late as the reign of Edward III. § VIII. Conclusion, that the mixture of French in Chaucer's writings was not owing to any affectation of his, but to the causes abovementioned, which in his time had generally introduced the Norman-Saxon instead of the Saxon Dialect; the same mixture being observable in other contemporary authors.

Part the Second. § I. The proposed observations upon the English Language confined to the actual state of it in the time of Chaucer. § II. and divided, so as to consider separately the Saxon and Norman parts of it. § III. The Saxon part considered in grammatical order. 1. The Prepositive Article. 2. Nouns substantive

and adjective. 3. Pronouns. 4. Verbs and Participles. 5. The indeclinable parts of speech. § IV. The Norman part considered generally, § V. and more particularly with respect to Nouns, substantive and adjective, Verbs, and Participles. § VI. Additional causes of the introduction of a great number of French terms into the English Language.

PART THE THIRD. § I. Preliminary observations upon English Poetry. The form of English Poetry probably borrowed from the Normans, there being no traces of Rime, or Metre, among the Saxons before the Conquest. The Metres and Rime of Modern Poetry derived from the Latin. § II. Progress of English Poetry to the reign of Henry II. Early attempts at riming. § III. Few English Poets known between the reign of Henry II. and that of Henry III. § IV. The *Ormulum* written in verses of fifteen syllables without rime. § V. The number of Rimers increased between the last mentioned period and the time when Chaucer began to write. § VI. State of our Poetry at that time. § VII. Account of the Metres then in use; § VIII. of those used by Chaucer. § IX. The Heroic Metre probably introduced by him, either from France or Italy. § X. A knowledge of the antient pronunciation of our language necessary in order to form a judgment of the Versification of Chaucer. § XI. How a critic in the age of Augustus would have proceeded in judging of the Metre of Ennius. § XII. The same method recommended with respect to Chaucer. General reasons for believing that he understood and practised the ordinary rules of Metre. § XIII. The offences against Metre, in an English verse, enumerated, as arising from 1. a superfluity, 2. a deficiency, of syllables; and 3. a misplacing of Accents. § XIV. No *superfluity* of syllables in Chaucer's verses. § XV. The seeming *deficiencies* in his Metre may generally be supplied by restoring the antient pronunciation of certain syllables, § XVI. and especially of the *e*

feminine. Reasons for believing that the final *e* in our antient language was pronounced like the *e* feminine of the French. § XVII. The third kind of irregularity, arising from a *misplacing of accents*, may be rectified, in many instances, by accenting certain words in a manner different from that now in use, and more agreeable to the French practice. Proofs that such a mode of accentuation was used by Chaucer, in words of Saxon as well as of French original. The early poets in France and Italy not exact in the disposition of their accents. § XVIII. Illustration of the foregoing Theory by a Grammatical and Metrical Analysis of the first eighteen lines of the Canterbury Tales.

AN ESSAY ON THE LANGUAGE AND VERSIFICATION OF CHAUCER.

THE Language of Chaucer has undergone two very different judgments. According to one (1), he is the "well of English undefiled;" according to the other (2), he has corrupted and deformed the English idiom by an immoderate mixture of French words. Nor do the opinions with respect to his Versification seem to have been less discordant. His contemporaries (3), and they who lived nearest

(1) Spenser, F. Q. b. IV. c. ii. st. 32.

(2) Verstegan, c. 7. "Some few ages after [the Conquest] came the Poet Geffery Chaucer, who writing his poesies in English is of some called the first illuminator of the English tongue. Of their opinion I am not, though I reverence Chaucer as an excellent Poet for his time. He was indeed *a great mingler of English with* FRENCH, unto which language (by like for that he was descended of French, or rather Wallon race) he carried a great affection."

Skinner, Etymol. L. A. Præf. "Ex hoc malesano novitatis pruritu, Belgæ Gallicas voces passim civitate sua donando patrii sermonis puritatem nuper non leviter inquinârunt, et CHAUCERUS poeta, pessimo exemplo, *integris vocum plaustris ex eadem* GALLIA *in nostram linguam invectis*, eam, nimis antea a Normannorum victoria adulteratam, omni fere nativa gratia et nitore spoliavit."

(3) Lydgate, Occleve, et al. See the Testimonies prefixed to Urry's Edit.

to his time universally extol him as the "chief Poete of Britaine," "the flour of Poetes," &c. titles, which must be supposed to imply their admiration of his metrical skill, as well as of his other poetical talents; but the later critics(4), though they leave him in possession of the same sounding titles, yet they are almost unanimously agreed, that he was either totally ignorant or negligent of metrical rules, and that his verses (if they may be so called) are

(4) I shall only quote Dryden, Pref. to his Fables. "The verse of Chaucer, I confess, is not harmonious to us;—They who lived with him, and some time after him, thought it musical; and it continues so even in our judgment, if compared with the numbers of Lidgate and Gower, his contemporaries:—'Tis true, I cannot go so far as he, who published the last edition of him [Mr. Speght]; for he would make us believe the fault is in our ears, and that there were really ten syllables in a verse where we find but nine. But this opinion is not worth confuting; 'tis so gross and obvious an error, that common sense (which is a rule in every thing but matters of Faith and Revelation) must convince the reader, that equality of numbers in every verse which we call *Heroick*, was either not known, or not always practised, in Chaucer's age. It were an easy matter to produce some thousands of his verses, which are lame for want of half a foot, and sometimes a whole one, and which no pronunciation can make otherwise."

This peremptory decision has never since, that I know, been controverted, except by Mr. Urry, whose design of restoring the metre of Chaucer by a collation of Mss. was as laudable, as his execution of it has certainly been unsuccessful.

frequently deficient, by a syllable or two of their just measure.

It is the purpose of the following Essay to throw some light upon both these questions. Admitting the fact, that the English of Chaucer has a great mixture of French in it, I hope to shew, that this mixture, if a crime, cannot fairly be laid to his charge. I shall then proceed to state some observations upon the most material peculiarities of the Norman-Saxon, or English Language, as it appears to have been in general use in the age of Chaucer; and lastly, applying these observations to the poetical parts of the Canterbury Tales, as they are faithfully printed in this edition from the best Mss. which I could procure, I shall leave it to the intelligent Reader to determine, whether Chaucer was really ignorant of the laws, or even of the graces, of Versification, and whether he was more negligent of either than the very early Poets in almost all languages are found to have been.

PART THE FIRST.

§ I. In order to judge, in the first place, how far Chaucer ought to be charged as the importer of the many French words and phrases, which are so visible in all his writings, it will be necessary to take

a short view of the early introduction and long prevalency of the French language in this country before his time. It might be sufficient, perhaps, for our purpose to begin this view at the Conquest: but I cannot help observing, from a contemporary Historian, that, several years before that great event, the language of France had been introduced into the Court of England, and from thence among the people. The account which Ingulphus gives of this matter is (5), that Edward, commonly called the Confessor, having been educated at the court of his uncle Duke Richard II. and having resided in Normandy many years, became *almost a Frenchman*. Upon his return from thence and accession to the throne of England in 1043, he brought over with him a number of Normans, whom he promoted to the highest dignities; and, according to Ingul-

(5) Ingulph. Hist. Croyl. p. 62. ed. Gale. "*Rex autem Edwardus natus in Anglia, sed nutritus in Normannia et diutissime immoratus,* pene in Gallicum transierat, *adducens ac attrahens de Normannia plurimos, quos variis dignitatibus promotos in immensum exaltabat.—Cœpit ergo tota terra sub Rege et sub aliis Normannis introductis Anglicos ritus dimittere, et Francorum mores in multis imitari,* Gallicum [scilicet] idioma omnes Magnates in suis curiis tanquam magnum gentilitium loqui, *chartas et chirographa sua more Francorum conficere, et propriam consuetudinem in his et in aliis multis erubescere.*"

phus, under the influence of the King and his Norman favourites, the whole nation began to lay aside their English fashions and imitate the manners of the French in many things. In particular, he says expressly, that *all the Nobility in their courts began to speak French, as a great piece of gentility.*

§ II. This fashion however of speaking French, having been adopted only in compliance with the caprice of the reigning prince, would not probably have spread very wide or lasted very long; but at the Revolution, which followed soon after in 1066, the language of the Norman conquerour was interwoven with the new political system (6), and the

(6) Robert Holkot (as quoted by Selden, *ad Eadmer.* p. 189.) says, that the Conquerour—"*deliberavit quomodo linguam Saxonicam posset destruere, et Angliam et Normanniam in idiomate concordare.*"—But Holkot wrote only in the fourteenth century, and I do not find that the earlier historians impute to the King so silly a project. On the contrary Ordericus Vitalis, l. iv. p. 520, assures us that William—"*Anglicam locutionem plerumque sategit ediscere: ut sine interprete querelam subjectæ legis posset intelligere, et scita rectitudinis unicuique (prout ratio dictaret) affectuose depromere. Ast a perceptione hujusmodi durior ætas illum compescebat, et tumultus multimodarum occupationum ad alia necessario adtrahebat.*"—And several of his publick instruments, which are still extant in Saxon, [Hickes G. A. S. p. 164. —Præf. p. xv, xvi.] prove that he had no objection to using that language in business; so that it seems more natural to

several establishments, which were made for the support and security of the one, all contributed, in a greater or less degree, to the diffusion and permanency of the other.

§ III. To begin with the court. If we consider that the King himself, the chief officers of state, and by far the greatest part of the nobility, were all Normans, and could probably speak no language but their own, we can have no doubt that French (7) was the ordinary language of the court. The few

suppose, that the introduction of the French language was a consequence only, and not an object, of his policy.

(7) I apprehend that long before this time the Danish tongue had ceased to be spoken in Normandy. It was never general there, as appears from a passage of Dudon, l. iii. p. 112. Duke William I. gives this reason for sending his son Richard to be educated at Baieux. "*Quoniam quidem* Rotomagensis *civitas* Romanâ *potius quam* Daciscâ *utitur eloquentiâ, et* Bajocacensis *fruitur frequentius* Daciscâ *linguâ quam* Romanâ, *volo igitur ut ad* Bajocacensia *deferatur quantocius mœnia*, &c." If we recollect, that the Danish settlers under Rollo were few in comparison with the original inhabitants, and had probably scarce any use of letters among them, we shall not be surprised that they did not preserve their language for above two or three generations.

From two other passages of the same Dudon we learn, that the Danish language, while it lasted in Normandy, was very similar to the Saxon [p. 99.], and yet different from it [p. 100.]; *qualem decet esse sororem.*

Saxons, who for some time(8) were admitted there, must have had the strongest inducements to acquire the same language as soon as possible, not merely for the sake of apprehending and answering insignificant questions in the circle, but because in that age affairs of the greatest importance were publickly transacted in the King's court, and there they might be called upon to answer for their possessions and even for their lives. In an ecclesiastical synod, held in the presence of the King in 1072, the venerable Bishop of Worcester, Wulstan, (whose *holy simplicity*, as the Historian(9) calls it,

(8) After the death of Edwin, and the imprisonment of Morcar in 1070, we do not read of any Saxon Earl, except Waltheof, and he was executed for misprision of treason about three years after. *Orderic. Vit.* l. iv. p. 536. It is singular, that Waltheof, according to the Saxon law, suffered death for the concealment of that treason, for which Roger de Breteuil, Earl of Hereford, being tried *secundum leges Normannorum*, could only be punished by a forfeiture of his inheritance and perpetual imprisonment. *Id.* p. 535. From this time (says Ingulphus, p. 70.) *Comitatus et Baronias, Episcopatus et Prælatias totius terræ suis Normannis Rex distribuit, et vix aliquem Anglicum ad honoris statum vel alicujus dominii principatum ascendere permisit.*

(9) Will. Malmesb. l. iii. p. 118. *Hic sancta simplicitas beati Vulstani*, &c. The story which follows perfectly justifies this character. Matt. Paris, ad an. 1095, says that in another Synod there was a formal design of deposing Wulstan, and that he was saved only by a miracle. He was accused "*simplicitatis et illite-*

seems to have preserved him from the degradation which almost all the other English Prelates underwent) was obliged to defend the rights of his see by an interpreter, *a monk* (according to the same (10) Historian) *of very little eloquence, but who had a smattering of the* Norman *language.*

§ IV. If we consider further, that the great Barons, to whom William(11) distributed a large share of his conquest, when released from their attendance in the King's court, retired to courts of their own, where they in their turn were surrounded by a numerous train of vassals, chiefly their own countrymen, we may be sure that the French language travelled with them into the most distant

raturæ;"—"*et quasi homo idiota,* qui linguam Gallicanam non noverat, nec regiis consiliis interesse poterat, *ipso Rege consentiente et hoc dictante, decernitur deponendus.*"

(10) Ibid. *Ita datâ benedictione Monacho, minimæ facundiæ viro, sed Normannicæ linguæ* sciolo, *rem perorans obtinuit.*

(11) There is a curious detail of part of this distribution in Ordericus Vitalis, l. iv. p. 521, 2. which concludes thus:—"*aliisque advenis, qui sibi cohæserant, magnos et multos honores contulit; et in tantum quosdam provexit, ut multos in Anglià ditiores et potentiores haberent clientes, quam eorum in Neustriâ fuerant parentes.*" There is an account in the Monast. Angl. t. i. p. 400. of the Conquerour's giving the whole county of Cumberland to Ranulph de Meschines, and of the division which Ranulph made of it among his relations and followers, who appear to have been all foreigners.

provinces, and was used by them, not only in their common conversation, but in their civil contracts, their judicial proceedings, and even in the promulgation of their laws(12). The many Castles, which William built(13) in different parts of the island,

(12) The antient Earls had a power of legislation within their Counties. William of Malmesbury, speaking of William Fitz-Osberne, Earl of Hereford, says; "*Manet in hunc diem in Comitatu ejus apud Herefordum legum quas statuit inconcussa firmitas; ut nullus miles pro qualicunque commisso plus septem solidis solvat; cum in aliis provinciis ob parvam occasiunculam in transgressione præcepti herilis, viginti vel viginti quinque pendantur.*" Lib. iii. p. 105.

(13) Ordericus Vitalis, l. iv. p. 511. observes, that before the conquest, "*Munitiones, quas Castella Galli nuncupant, Anglicis provinciis paucissimæ fuerant: et ob hoc Angli, licet bellicosi fuerint et audaces, ad resistendum tamen inimicis extiterant debiliores.*" William, at his landing, placed garrisons at *Pevensey* and *Hastings*. After the battle, he took possession of *Dover*, and left a garrison there. He caused "*firmamenta quædam*" to be made at *London*, and built a strong citadel at *Winchester*. Upon his return from Normandy, after the first insurrection of the English, he built a castle within the city of *Exeter*; another at *Warwick*; and another at *Nottingham*. In the city of *York*, "*munitionem firmavit, quam delectis militibus custodiendam tradidit.*" At *Lincoln*, *Huntingdon*, and *Cambridge*, "*castra locavit, et tutelam eorum fortissimis viris commendavit.*" He had also garrisons at *Montacute* in Somersetshire, and at *Shrewsbury*. He built fortifications at *Chester* and *Stafford*. We read also of castles at *Arundel* and *Stutesbury* at this time; and *Norwich* was so strong as to stand a siege of three months. *Ord. Vit.* p. 500—535.

must also have contributed very much to the propagation of the French language among the natives, as it is probable that the Foreigners, of whom the garrisons were (14) entirely composed, would insist upon carrying on all their transactions with the neighbouring country in their own language.

§ V. But the great alteration, which, from political motives, was made in the state of the clergy at that time, must have operated perhaps more efficaciously than any other cause to give the French language a deep root in England. The Conquerour seems to have been fully apprized of the strength which the new government might derive from a Clergy more closely attached to himself by a community of interests than the native English were likely to be. Accordingly, from the very beginning of his reign, all ecclesiastical preferments, as fast as they became vacant, were given to his Norman chaplains; and, not content to avail himself of the ordinary course of succession, he contrived (15), upon various charges

(14) Orderic. Vital. l. iv. p. 506. *Custodes in castellis strenuos viros* ex Gallis *collocavit, et opulenta beneficia, pro quibus labores et pericula libenter tolerarent, distribuit.*

(15) See the transactions of the Council held at *Winchester* in the year 1070, ap. Flor. Vigorn. p. 636. Having spoken of the degradation of Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Agelmar, Bishop of the East Saxons, he proceeds thus: *Abbates etiam aliqui*

of real or pretended irregularities, to remove several of the English Bishops and Abbots, whose places were in like manner immediately supplied by Foreigners. In short, in the space of a very few years, all the Sees of England were filled with Normans, or strangers naturalized, if I may so say, in Normandy, and the greatest part of the Abbeys in

ibi degradati sunt, operam dante rege ut quamplures ex Anglis suo honore privarentur, in quorum locum suæ gentis personas subrogavit, ob confirmationem sui (quod noviter acquisierat) regni. *Hic et nonnullos, tam episcopos quam Abbates*, quos nulla evidenti causa nec concilia nec leges seculi damnabant, *suis honoribus privavit, et usque ad finem vitæ custodiæ mancipatos detinuit, suspicione, ut diximus, tantum inductus novi regni.*

In confirmation of what is said here and in the text, if we examine the subscriptions to an Ecclesiastical Constitution in 1072, ap. Will. Malm. l. iii. p. 117. we find that the two Archbishops, seven Bishops out of eleven, and six Abbots out of twelve, were Foreigners: and in about five years more the four other Bishopricks, and five at least of the other six Abbeys, were in the hands of Foreigners.

Another Ecclesiastical Constitution made at this time has very much the appearance of a political regulation. It orders "that the Bishops seats shall be removed from towns to cities;" and in consequence of it the See of Lichfield was removed to Chester; that of Selesey to Chichester; that of Elmham to Thetford, and afterwards to Norwich; that of Shireburne to Salisbury, and that of Dorchester to Lincoln. *Will. Malm.* l. iii. p. 118. When the King had got a set of Bishops to his mind, he would wish to have them placed, where their influence could be of most service to him.

the kingdom were under governours of the same description.

§ VI. It must be allowed, that the confessed superiority (16) in literature of the Norman clergy over the English at that time furnished the King with a specious pretext for these promotions; and it is probable, that the Prelates, who were thus promoted, made use of the same pretext to justify themselves in disposing of all their best benefices among their friends and countrymen. That this was their constant practice is certain. Nor were the new Abbots less industrious to stock their convents (17) with Foreigners, whom they invited over

(16) Ordericus Vitalis, l. iv. p. 518. says, that the Normans at the Conquest found the English "*agrestes et pene illiteratos*;" and he imputes, with some probability, the decay of learning among them, from the time of Beda and others, to the continual ravages and oppressions of the Danes. See also William of Malmesbury, l. iii. p. 101, 2. It may be observed too, from Continuat. Hist. Croyland, by Peter of Blois, p. 114. that the first regular lectures (of which we have any account) at Cambridge were read there by four foreign Monks, who had come over into England with Jeffrey, Abbot of Croyland, formerly Prior of St. Evroul. They are said to have read "*diversis in locis a se divisi et formam Aurelianensis studii secuti*," three of them in Grammar, Logick, and Rhetorick, and the fourth in Theology.

(17) See the preceding note. There was no great harmony at first between the English monks and their new governours. See

from the continent, partly perhaps for the pleasure of their society, and partly (as we may suppose) in expectation of their support against the cabals of the English monks. And when the great Barons, following the royal example, applied themselves to make their peace with the Church by giving her a share of their plunder, it was their usual custom to begin their religious establishments with a colony (18) from some Norman Monastery.

the proceedings at Glastonbury under Thurstin [Will. Malm. l. iii. p. 110], and at Canterbury against Wido. [Chron. Saxon. p. 179, 180. ed. Gibson.]

(18) The Conquerour had put Goisbert, a Monk of Marmontier, at the head of his new foundation of Battle Abbey. *Ord. Vital.* l. iv. p. 505. In like manner Roger de Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury, sent for Monks from Sées to begin his Abbey at Shrewsbury. *Id.* l. v. p. 581. Walter Espec also brought over Monks of Clervaulx to fill his two Abbeys, of Rivaulx and Wardun. *Ailr. Rievall. ap. X Script.* p. 338.

Beside these and many other independent foundations, which were in this manner opened for the reception of foreign Monks in preference to the natives, a considerable number of Religious Houses were built and endowed, as cells to different monasteries abroad; and as such were constantly filled by detachments from the superiour society. They are frequently mentioned in our histories under the general name of the *Alien Priories;* and though several of them, upon various pretexts, had withdrawn themselves from their foreign connexions and been made denizens, no less than one hundred and forty remained in 1414, which were then

§ VII. In this state of things, which seems to have continued (19) with little variation to the

all suppressed and their revenues vested in the crown. See the List. Monast. Angl. v. i. p. 1035.

(19) I suppose that, during this whole period of above 250 years, the English language was continually gaining ground, by slow and almost imperceptible degrees, in proportion nearly as the English natives were emerging from that state of depression in which they were placed by the Conquest. We have no reason to believe that much progress was made in either of these matters before the reign of King John. The loss of Normandy, &c. in that reign, and the consequent regulations of Henry III. and Louis IX. by which the subjects of either crown were made incapable of holding lands in the dominions of the other [Matth. Paris, ad an. 1244], must have greatly diminished the usual conflux of Normans to the English court; and the intestine commotions in this country under John and Henry III. in which so many of the greater Barons lost their lives and estates, must eventually have opened a way for the English to raise themselves to honours and possessions, to which they had very rarely before been admitted to aspire.

In the year 1258, the 42 Henry III. we have a particular instance (the first, I believe, of the kind) of attention on the side of government to the English part of the community. The Letters Patent, which the King was advised to publish in support of the Oxford Provisions, were sent to each County in Latin, French, and English. [Annal. Burton. p. 416. One of them has been printed from the Patent-roll, 43 H. III. n. 40. m. 15. by Somner in his Dict. Sax. v. UNNAN, and by Hearne, Text. Roff. p. 391.] At the same time all the proceedings in the business of the Provisions appear to have been carried on in French, and the principal persons in both parties are evidently of foreign extraction.

time of Edward III. it is probable, that the French and English languages subsisted together through-

If a conjecture may be allowed in a matter so little capable of proof, I should think it probable, that the necessity, which the great Barons were under at this time, of engaging the body of the people to support them in their opposition to a new set of foreigners, chiefly Poitevins, contributed very much to abolish the invidious distinctions which had long subsisted between the French and English parts of the nation. In the early times after the Conquest, if we may believe Henry of Huntingdon [L. vi. p. 370.] "to be called an Englishman was a reproach:" but when the Clares, the Bohuns, the Bigods, &c. were raising armies for the expulsion of Foreigners out of the kingdom, they would not probably be unwilling to have themselves considered as natives of England. Accordingly Matthew Paris [p. 833.] calls Hugh Bigod (a brother of the Earl Marshall) *virum de terra Anglorum naturalem et ingenuum;* and in another passage [p. 851.] he appropriates the title of "*alienigenæ*" to those foreigners, "*qui Reginæ attinentes per eam introducti fuerant in Angliam:* and so perhaps the word ought generally to be understood in the transactions of that reign. None but persons born out of England were then esteemed as Foreigners.

About the same time we find an Archbishop of York objecting to Clerks (recommended to benefices by the Pope), because they were "ignorant of the English language" [Mat. Par. p. 831.]; which seems to imply, that a knowledge of that language was then considered among the proper qualifications of an Ecclesiastick: but that it was not necessarily required, even in the Parochial Clergy, appears from the great number of foreign Parsons, Vicars, &c. who had the King's Letters of protection in the 25th year of Edward I. See the Lists in Prynne, t. i. p. 709—720.

out the kingdom; the higher orders, both of the Clergy and Laity (20), speaking almost universally

(20) The testimony of Robert of Gloucester (who lived in the times of H. III. and E. I.) is so full and precise to this point, that I trust the Reader will not be displeased to see it in his own words, or rather in the words of that very incorrect Ms. which Hearne has religiously followed in his edition.

Rob. Glouc. p. 364.

Thus come lo! Engelond into Normannes honde.
And the Normans ne couthe speke tho *bote her owe*[a] speche,
And speke Frenche as *dude atom*,[b] and here chyldren dude al so teche.
So that hey men of thys lond, that of her blod come,
Holdeth alle thulke speche, that hii of hem nome.
Vor bote[c] a man couthe French, *me tolth* of hym wel *lute*;[d]
Ac[e] lowe men holdeth to Englyss and to her *kunde* speche *yute*[f].
Ich wene ther ne be man in world contreyes none,
That ne holdeth to her kunde speche, bote Engelond one.
Ac wel me wot vor to conne bothe wel yt ys,
Vor the more that a man con, the more worth he ys.

I shall throw together here a few miscellaneous facts in confirmation of this general testimony of Robert of Gloucester.

A letter of Hugh, Bishop of Coventry, preserved by Hoveden [p. 704.] assures us, that William, Bishop of Ely, Chancellor and Prime Minister to Richard I. "*linguam Anglicanam prorsus ignorabat.*"

In the reign of Henry III. Robert of Gloucester, intending, as it should seem, to give the very words of Peter, Bishop of Here-

[a] *But their own.*
[b] *Did at home.*
[c] *For but* ——
[d] *Men told.*—*lite*, little.
[e] *But*, *kinde* natural.
[f] *Yet.*

French, the lower retaining the use of their native tongue, but also frequently adding to it a know-

ford (whom he has just called "a Freinss bishop)," makes him speak thus.—"*Par Crist*," he sede, "*Sir Tomas, tu is maveis. Meint ben te ay fet.*" Rob. Glouc. p. 537.

There is a more pleasant instance of the familiar use of the French language by a bishop, as late as the time of Edward II. Louis, consecrated Bishop of Durham in 1318, was unfortunately very illiterate—"laicus; Latinum non intelligens, sed cum difficultate pronuncians. Unde, cum in consecratione suâ profiteri debuit, quamvis per multos dies ante instructorem habuisset, legere nescivit: et cum, auriculantibus [f. articulantibus] aliis, cum difficultate ad illud verbum *metropoliticæ* pervenisset, et diu anhelans pronunciare non posset, dixit in Gallico; *Seit pur dite*.—Et cum similiter celebraret ordines, nec illud verbum *in ænigmate* proferre posset, dixit circumstantibus; *Par Seint Lowys, il ne fu pas curteis, qui ceste parole ici escrit.*" Hist. Dunelm. ap. Wharton, Ang. Sac. t. i. p. 761.

The transactions at Norham, in 1291, the 20 Edw. I. with respect to the Scottish succession, appear to have been almost wholly carried on in French, for which it is difficult to account but by supposing that language to have been the language of the Court in both nations. See the Roll de Superior. Reg. Angl. in Prynne, t. i. p. 487, et seq. Edward's claim of the Superiority is first made by Sir Roger Brabanson *Sermone Gallico*; and afterwards the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and the King himself, speak to the assembly of English and Scots in the same language. Ibid. p. 499. 501.

The answers of the Bishop of Durham to the Pope's Nuncioes *in Gallico* [Walt. Hemingf. ad an. 1295.] may be supposed to have been out of complaisance to the Cardinals; (though, by the

ledge of the other. The general inducements which the English had to acquire the French language have been touched upon above; to which must be added, that the children, who were put to learn Latin, were under a necessity of learning French at the same time, as it was the constant practice in all schools, from the Conquest (21) till

way, they do not appear to have been Frenchmen;) but no such construction can be put upon the following fact related by Matthew of Westminster [ad an. 1301. p. 438.] The Archbishop of Canterbury informs the Pope, that he had presented his Holiness's letters to the King in a full court "*quas ipse dominus rex reverenter recipiens, eas publice legi coram omnibus,* et in Gallicâ linguâ fecerat patenter exponi."

(21) Ingulphus, a contemporary writer, informs us that this practice began at the Conquest. p. 71. "*Ipsum etiam idioma* [Anglicum] *tantum abhorrebant* [Normanni], *quod leges terræ statutaque Anglicorum regum linguâ Gallicâ tractarentur;* et pueris etiam in scholis principia literarum grammatica Gallice ac non Anglice traderentur; *modus etiam scribendi Anglicus omitteretur, et modus Gallicus in chartis et in libris omnibus admitteretur.*"—And Trevisa, the translator and augmenter of Higden's Polychronicon in the reign of Richard II. gives us a very particular account of its beginning to be disused within his own memory. The two passages of Higden and Trevisa throw so much light upon the subject of our present enquiry, that I shall insert them both at length, from Ms. *Harl.* 1900. as being more correct in several places than the Ms. from which Dr. Hickes formerly printed them in his Præf. ad Thes. Ling. Septent. p. xvii.

about the reign of Edward III. to make the scholars construe their Latin lessons into French. From the discontinuance of this practice, as well as from other causes, the use and, probably, the knowledge

HIGDEN'S *Polychron.* b. i. c. lix. This apayringe of the birthe tonge is by cause of tweye thinges: oon is for children in scole, azenes the usage and maner of alle other naciouns, beth compelled for to leve her owne langage, and for to constrewe her lessouns and her thingis a Frensche, and haveth siththe that the Normans come first into England. Also gentil mennes children beth ytauzt for to speke Frensche, from the tyme that thei beth rokked in her cradel, and kunneth speke and playe with a childes brooche. And uplondish men wole likne hem self to gentil men, and fondeth with grete bisynesse for to speke Frensche, for to be the more ytold of.

TREVISA. This maner was myche yused to fore the first moreyn, and is siththe som del ychaungide. For John Cornwaile, a maistre of grammer, chaungide the lore in grammer scole and construction of Frensch into Englisch, and Richard Pencriche lerned that maner teching of him, and other men of Pencriche. So that now, the zere of oure lord a thousand thre hundred foure score and fyve, of the secunde king Rychard after the Conquest nyne, in alle the gramer scoles of Englond children leveth Frensch, and construeth and lerneth an Englisch, and haveth therby avauntage in oon side and desavauntage in another. Her avauntage is, that thei lerneth her grammer in lasse tyme than children were wont to do. Desavauntage is, that now children of grammer scole kunneth no more Frensch than can her lifte heele. And that is harm for hem, and thei schul passe the see and travaile in strange londes, and in many other places also. Also gentel men haveth now mych ylefte for to teche her children Frensch.

of French, as a separate language, received a considerable check. In the 36th year of Edward III. a law (22) was made, "that all pleas, in the courts of the King or of any other Lord, shall be pleaded and judged in the English tongue," and the preamble recites, "*that the French tongue* (in which they had been usually pleaded, &c.) *was too much unknown*," or disused; and yet, for near threescore

(22) This celebrated statute is said by Walsingham, [p. 179.] to have been made "*ad petitionem Communitatis*;" but no such petition appears upon the Parliament-roll: and it seems rather to have been an Act of Grace, moving from the King, who on the same day entered into the fiftieth year of his age; "*unde in suo Jubileo populo suo se exhibuit gratiosum.*" Walsing. ibid. It is remarkable too, that the cause of summons at the beginning of this Parliament was declared by Sir Henry Greene, Chief Justice, *en Engleis* (says the Record for the first time): and the same Entry is repeated in the Records of the Parliaments 37 and 38 Edw. III. but not in those of 40 Edw. III. or of any later Parliament; either because the custom of opening the cause of summons in French was restored again after that short interval, or, perhaps, because the new practice of opening it in English was so well established, in the opinion of the Clerk, as not to need being marked by a special Entry.

The reasons assigned in the preamble to this Statute, for having Pleas and Judgments in the English tongue, might all have been urged, with at least equal force, for having the Laws themselves in that language. But the times were not yet ripe for that innovation. The English scale was clearly beginning to preponderate, but the slowness of its motion proves that it had a great weight to overcome.

years after this (23) the proceedings in Parliament, with very few exceptions, appear to have been all in French, and the statutes continued to be published in the same language, for above one hundred and twenty years, till the first of Richard III.

§ VIII. From what has been said I think we may fairly conclude, that the English language must

(23) All the Parliamentary proceedings in English before 1422, the first of Henry VI. are the few which follow.

The Confession of Thomas Duke of Gloucester, taken at Calais by William Rickhill and recorded in Parliament, *inter Plac. Coron.* 21 Ric. II. n. 9. It is printed in Tyrrell, v. iii. p. 793.

Some passages in the Deposition of Richard II. printed at the end of Knighton, int. X Scriptores.

The ordinance between William Lord the Roos and Robert Tirwhitt, Justice of the King's Bench. 13 Hen. IV. n. 13.

A Petition of the Commons with the King's answer. 2 Hen. V. n. 22.

A Proviso in English inserted into a French grant of a Disme and Quinzisme. 9 Hen. V. n. 10.

At the beginning of the reign of Henry VI. the two languages seem to have been used indifferently. The Subsidy of Wolle, &c. was granted in English. 1 Hen. VI. n. 19. A Proviso in French was added by the Commons to the Articles for the Council of Regency, which are in English. Ibid. n. 33. Even the Royal Assent was given to Bills in English. 2. Hen. VI. and n. 54. Be it ordeined as it is asked. Be it as it is axed.— and again, n. 55.

I have stated this matter so particularly, in order to shew, that when the French language ceased to be generally understood,

have imbibed a strong tincture of the French, long before the age of Chaucer, and consequently that he ought not to be charged as the importer of words and phrases, which he only used after the example of his predecessors and in common with his contemporaries. This was the real fact, and is capable of being demonstrated to any one, who will take the trouble of comparing the writings of Chaucer with those of Robert of Gloucester (24) and Robert of

it was gradually disused in Parliamentary proceedings; and from thence, I think, we may fairly infer, that while it was used in those proceedings, constantly and exclusively of the English, it must have been very generally understood.

(24) Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle has been published by Hearne, Oxf. 1724, faithfully, I dare say, but from incorrect Mss. The author speaks of himself [p. 560.] as living at the time of the Battle of Eveshaim in 1265; and from another passage [p. 224.] he seems to have lived beyond the year 1278, though his history ends in 1270. See Hearne's Pref. p. lxviii.

Robert Manning of Brunne, or Bourn, in Lincolnshire, translated into English rimes, from the French of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, a treatise called "*Manuel de Pechés*," as early as the year 1303. This work of his has never been printed, but is preserved among the Harleian Mss. n. 1701. and the Bodleian, n. 2323. He also translated from the French a history of England; the first part, or *Gesta Britonum*, from Master Wace; the remainder, to the death of Edward I. from Peter of Langtoft. His translation was finished in 1338. The latter part, with some extracts from the former, was printed by Hearne in 1725, from a single Ms.

Brunne, who both lived before him, and with those of Sir John Mandeville and Wicliff, who lived at the same time with him. If we could for a moment suppose the contrary; if we could suppose that the English idiom, in the age of Chaucer, remained pure and unmixed, as it was spoken in the courts of Alfred or Egbert, and that the French was still a foreign, or at least a separate language; I would ask, whether it is credible, that a Poet, writing in English upon the most familiar subjects, would stuff his compositions with French words and phrases, which, upon the above supposition must have been unintelligible to the greatest part of his readers; or, if he had been so very absurd, is it conceivable, that he should have immediately become, not only the most admired, but also the most popular writer of his time and country?

Sir John Mandevilles account of his Travells was written in 1356. In the last edition, Lond. 1727, the text is said to have been formed from a collation of several Mss. and seems to be tolerably correct.

Wicliff died in 1384. His translation of the New Testament was printed for the first time by Lewis, Lond. 1731. There is an immense Catalogue of other works, either really his or ascribed to him, still extant in Ms. See his Life by Lewis; and Tanner, Bibl. Brit.

PART THE SECOND.

HAVING thus endeavoured to shew, in opposition to the ill-grounded censures of Verstegan and Skinner, that the corruption, or improvement, of the English language by a mixture of French was not originally owing to Chaucer, I shall proceed, in the second part of this Essay, to make some observations upon the most material peculiarities of that Norman-Saxon dialect, which I suppose to have prevailed in the age of Chaucer, and which, in substance, remains to this day the language of England.

§ I. By what means the French tongue was first introduced and propagated in this island has been sufficiently explained above; but to ascertain with any exactness the degrees, by which it insinuated itself and was ingrafted into the Saxon, would be a much more difficult task (25), for want of a regular

(25) In order to trace with exactness the progress of any language, it seems necessary, 1. that we should have before us a continued series of authors; 2. that those authors should have been approved, as having written, at least, with purity; and 3. that their writings should have been correctly copied. In the English language, we have scarce any authors within the first century after the Conquest; of those, who wrote before Chaucer,

series of the writings of approved authors transmitted to us by authentic copies. Luckily for us, as our concern is solely with that period when the incorporation of the two languages was completed, it is of no great importance to determine the precise time at which any word or phrase became naturalized; and for the same reason, we have no need to enquire minutely, with respect to the other alterations, which the Saxon language in its several stages appears to have undergone, how far they proceeded from the natural mutability of human speech, especially among an unlearned people, and how far they were owing to a successive conflux of Danish and Norman invaders.

§ II. The following observations therefore will chiefly refer to the state, in which the English language appears to have been about the time of Chaucer, and they will naturally divide themselves into two parts. The first will consider the remains of the antient Saxon mass, however defaced or disguised by various accidents; the second will endea-

and whose writings have been preserved, we have no testimony of approbation from their contemporaries or successors; and lastly, the Copies of their works, which we have received, are in general so full of inaccuracies, as to make it often very difficult for us to be assured, that we are in possession of the genuine words of the Author.

vour to point out the nature and effects of the accessions, which, in the course of near three centuries, it had received from Normandy.

§ III. For the sake of method it will be convenient to go through the several parts of speech in the order, in which they are commonly ranged by Grammarians.

1. The Prepositive Article ꝥe, ꝥeo, þat, (which answered to the ὁ, ἡ, τo, of the Greeks, in all its varieties of gender, case, and number,) had been long laid aside, and instead of it an indeclinable *the* was prefixed to all sorts of nouns, in all cases, and in both numbers.

2. The Declensions of the Nouns Substantive were reduced from six to one; and instead of a variety of cases in both numbers, they had only a Genitive case singular, which was uniformly deduced from the Nominative by adding to it *es*; or only *s*, if it ended in an *e* feminine; and that same form was used to express the Plural number (26) in all its

(26) It is scarce necessary to take notice of a few Plurals, which were expressed differently, though their number was greater in the time of Chaucer than it is now. Some of them seem to retain their termination in *en* from the second Declension of the Saxons; as, oxen, eyen, hosen, &c. Others seem to have adopted it *euphoniæ gratiâ*; as, brethren, eyren, instead of, bꝛoðꝛu, æȝꝛu. And a few seem to have been always irregu-

cases: as, Nom. *Shour*, Gen. *Shoures*, Plur. *Shoures*. Nom. *Name*, Gen. *Names*, Plur. *Names*.

The Nouns Adjective had lost all distinction of Gender, Case, or Number.

3. The Primitive Pronouns retained one oblique case (27) in each number: as, *Ic*, or *I*; *We*: Obl. *Me*; *Us*:—*Thou*; *Ye*: Obl. *Thee*; *You*.—*He*, *She*; *Hi* (28), or *They*: Obl. *Him*, *Hire*; *Hem*, or *Them*.

Their Possessives were in the same state with the Adjectives; *Min*, *Thin*, *His*, *Hire*; *Oure*, *Youre*, *Hir*, or *Their* (29).

larly declined; as, men, wimmen, mice, lice, feet, &c. See Hickes, Gr. A. S. p. 11, 12.

(27) I take no notice here of the Genitive cases, *min*, *thin*, *oure*, *youre*, &c. as being at this time hardly ever distinguishable from Pronouns Possessive. How are we to know whether *min boke* should be rendered *liber mei*, or *liber meus*? In the Plural number however, in a few instances, the Genitive case seems to have retained its proper power. C. T. v. 825. oure aller cok—would be more naturally translated—*nostrûm* omnium gallus, than *noster* omnium. And so in P. P. fol. cxi. Youre aller hele—*vestrûm* omnium salus; not, *vestra*.

(28) It is very difficult to say from whence, or why, the Pronouns, *They*, *Them*, and *Their*, were introduced into our language. The Saxon Pronouns, *Hi*, *Hem*, and *Hir*, seem to have been in constant use in the time of Robert of Gloucester. Sir John Mandeville and Chaucer use *They*, for *Hi*; but never, as I remember, (in the Mss. of authority) *Them*, or *Their*.

(29) The four last of these Possessive Pronouns were sometimes

The Interrogative and Relative *Who* had a Genitive and Accusative case, *Whos*, and *Whom*, but no variety of Number.

On the contrary, the Demonstrative, *This*, and *That*, had a Plural expression, *Thise*, and *Tho*, but no variety of case.

The other words, which are often, though improperly, placed in the class of Pronouns, were all become undeclined, like the Adjectives; except, *Eyther*, alteruter; *Neyther*, neuter; *Other*, alter; which had a Genitive case Singular, *Eytheres*, *Ney-*

expressed a little differently, viz. *Hires*, *Oures*, *Youres*, and *Hirs*, or *Theirs*; as they are still, when the Noun to which they belong is understood, or when they are placed after it in a sentence. To the question, Whose book is this? we answer, *Hers*, *Ours*, *Yours*, or *Theirs*: or we declare; This book is *Hers*, *Ours*, &c. I can hardly conceive that the final *s* in these words is a mark of the Possessive (or Genitive) case, as a very able writer [Short Introduction to English Grammar, p. 35, 6.] seems to be inclined to think; because in the instances just mentioned, and in all which I have been able to find or to imagine, I cannot discover the least trace of the usual powers of the Genitive case. The learned Wallis [Gram. Ang. c. 7.] has explained the use of these Pronouns without attempting to account for their form. He only adds; "Nonnulli, *hern*, *ourn*, *yourn*, *hisn*, dicunt, pro *hers*, *ours*, &c. sed barbarè, nec quisquam (credo) sic scribere solet." If it could be proved that these words were antiently terminated in *n*, we might be led to conjecture that they were originally abbreviations of *her own*, *our own*, &c. the *n* being afterwards softened into *s*, as it has been in many other words.

theres, *Otheres*: *Other*, alius, had a Genitive case singular, and a Plural number, *Otheres*; and *Aller* (a corruption of ealɲa) was still in use, as the Genitive Plural of *Alle* (30).

4. The Verbs, at the time of which we are treating, were very nearly reduced to the simple state in which they are at present.

(30) It may be proper here to take a little notice of the Pronoun, or Pronominal Adjective, *Self*, which our best Grammarians, from Wallis downwards, have attempted to metamorphose into a Substantive. In the Saxon language, it is certain that *Sylf* was declined like other Adjectives, and was joined in construction with Pronouns Personal and Substantives, just as *ipse* is in Latin. They said, Ic sylf, Ego ipse; Min sylfes, mei ipsius; Me sylfne, me ipsum, &c. Petrus sylf, Petrus ipse, &c. [See Hickes, Gr. A. S. p. 26.] In the age of Chaucer, *Self*, like other Adjectives, was become undeclined. Though he writes, *Self*, *Selve*, and *Selven*, those varieties do not denote any distinction of case or number; for he uses indifferently, *himself* and *himselven*; *hemself* and *hemselven*. He joins it with Substantives, in the sense of *ipse*, as the Saxons did. [See v. 2862.] In that *selve* grove. In illo ipso nemore. v. 4535. Thy *selve* neighebour. Ipse tuus vicinus. But his great departure from the antient usage was with respect to the Pronouns Personal prefixed to *Self*. Instead of declining them through the cases which they still retained, he uses constantly, Myself, for, 1 self, and, Me self; Thyself, for, Thou self, and, Thee self; Him self and Hire self, for, He self and She self; and in the Plural number, Our self, for, We self, and Us self; Your self, for, Ye self, and You self; and Hem self, for They self.

They had four Modes, as now; the Indicative, the Imperative, the Subjunctive, and the Infinitive; and only two expressions of Time, the Present and the Past. All the other varieties of Mode and Time were expressed by Auxiliary Verbs.

In the Inflexions of their Verbs, they differed very little from us, in the Singular number: *I love, Thou lovest, He loveth:* but in the Plural they were

It would be vain to attempt to defend this practice of Chaucer upon any principles of reason or grammatical analogy. All that can be said for it is, that perhaps any regular practice was preferable to the confusion and uncertainty which seems to have prevailed before. Accordingly, the writers who succeeded him following his example, it became a rule, as I conceive, of the English language, that Personal Pronouns prefixed to *Self* were only used in one case in each number; viz. those of the First and Second Person in the Genitive case, according to the Saxon form, and those of the Third in the Accusative.

By degrees a custom was introduced of annexing *Self* to Pronouns in the Singular number only, and *Selves* (a corruption, I suppose, of *Selven*) to those in the Plural. This probably contributed to persuade our late Grammarians that *Self* was a Substantive; as the true English Adjective does not vary in the Plural number. Another cause of their mistake might be, that they considered, *my, thy, our, your,* to which *self* is usually joined, as Pronouns *Possessive;* whereas I think it more probable that they were the Saxon Genitive cases of the *Personal* Pronouns. The metaphysical Substantive *Self,* of which our more modern Philosophers and Poets have made so much use, was unknown, I believe, in the time of Chaucer.

not agreed among themselves; some (31) adhering to the Old Saxon form; *We loveth, Ye loveth, They loveth;* and others adopting, what seems to have been, the Teutonic; *We loven, Ye loven, They loven.* In the Plural of the Past Tense the latter form prevailed universally: I loved, thou lovedst, he loved; *We loveden, Ye loveden, They loveden.*

The second person Plural in the Imperative Mode regularly terminated in *eth;* as, *Loveth* ye (32); though the final consonants, according to the genius of the language, were frequently omitted, especially in verse.

The Saxon termination of the Infinitive in *an* had been long changed into *en; to loven, to liven,* &c. and they were beginning to drop the *n; to love, to live.*

The Participle of the Present Time began to be generally terminated in *ing;* as, *loving;* though the

(31) In the long quotation from Trevisa (which see above, n. 21.) it may be observed, that all his Plural Verbs of the Present Tense terminate in *eth;* whereas in Sir John Mandeville and Chaucer they terminate almost as constantly in *en.*

(32) Mand. p. 281. And at certeyn houres—thei seyn to certeyn officeres—*Maketh pees* (i. e. Make ye silence). And than sein the Officeres, *Now pees! lysteneth* (i. e. listen ye)—In the following page, *Stondeth,* is used for, *Stand ye;* and *Putteth,* for, *Put ye.*

old form, which terminated in *ende*, or *ande*, was still in use; as, *lovende*, or *lovande*. The Participle of the Past time continued to be formed, as the Past time itself was, in *ed*; as, *loved*; or in some contraction of *ed* (33); except among the irregular

(33) The methods, by which the final *ed* of the Past Tense and its Participle was contracted or abbreviated, in the age of Chaucer, were chiefly the following:

1. By throwing away the *d*.

This method took place in Verbs, whose last Consonant was *t*, preceded by a Consonant. Thus, *caste, coste, hurte, putte, slitte*, were used instead of, *casted, costed, hurted, putted, slitted*.

2. By transposing the *d*.

This was very generally done in Verbs, whose last Consonant was *d*, preceded by a Vowel. Thus, instead of, *reded, leded, spreded, bleded, feded*, it was usual to write, *redde, ledde, spredde, bledde, fedde*.—And this same method of transposition, I apprehend, was originally applied to shorten those words which we now contract by Syncope; as *lov'd, liv'd, smil'd, hear'd, fear'd*, which were antiently written, *lovde, livde, smilde, herde, ferde*.

3. By transposing the *d* and changing it into *t*.

This method was used 1. in Verbs, whose last Consonant was *t*, preceded by a Vowel. Thus, *leted, sweted, meted*, were changed into, *lette, swette, mette*.—2. in Verbs, whose last Consonant was *d* preceded by a Consonant. Thus, *bended, bilded, girded*, were changed into, *bente, bilte, girte*.—And generally, in Verbs, in which *d* is changed into *t*, I conceive that *d* was first transposed; so that *dwelled, passed, dremed, feled, keped*, should be supposed to have been first changed into, *dwellde, passde, dremde, felde, kepde*, and then into, *dwelte, paste, dremte, felte, kepte*.

Verbs (34), where for the most part it terminated in *en*; as, *bounden, founden.*

The greatest part of the Auxiliary Verbs were only in use in the Present and Past Tenses of their Indicative and Subjunctive Modes. They were inflected in those tenses like other Verbs, and were prefixed to the Infinitive Mode of the Verb to which they were Auxiliary. I *shall* loven; I *will*, or *woll*,

4. The last method, together with a change of the radical vowel, will account for the analogy of a species of Verbs, generally reputed anomalous, which form their Past Time and its Participle, according to modern orthography, in *ght*. The process seems to have been thus. *Bring, bringed, brongde, brogde, brogte; Think, thinked, thonkde, thokde, thokte; Teche, teched, tachde, tachte,* &c. Only *fought*, from *fighted*, seems to have been formed, by throwing away the *d* (according to method 1.) and changing the radical Vowel. See instances of similar contractions in the Francic language. Hickes, Gramm. Fr. Th. p. 66.

(34) I consider those Verbs only as irregular, in which the Past Time and its Participle differ from each other. Their varieties are too numerous to be particularly examined here; but I believe there are scarce any, in which the deviations from the regular form will not appear to have been made by some method of contraction, or abbreviation, similar to those which have been pointed out in the last note among the Regular Verbs. The common termination of the Participle in *en* is clearly a substitution for *ed*, probably for the sake of a more agreeable sound; and it is often shortened, as *ed* has been shewn to be, by transposition. Thus, *drawen, knowen, boren, stolen*, were changed into *drawne, knowne, borne, stolne.*

loven; I *may*, or *mow*, loven; I *can*, or *con*, loven, &c. We *shullen* loven; We *willen*, or *wollen* loven; We *mowen* loven; We *connen* loven, &c. In the Past tense, I (35) *shulde* loven; I *wolde* loven; I *mighte*, or *moughte* loven; I *coude* loven, &c. We *shulden*, we *wolden*, we *mighten*, or *moughten*, we *couden* loven, &c.

The Auxiliary *To Haven* was a complete Verb, and, being prefixed to the Participle of the Past time, was used to express the Preterperfect and Preterpluperfect Tenses. I *have* loved, Thou *havest*, or *hast* loved, He *haveth*, or *hath* loved; We *haven*, or *han* loved, &c. I *hadde* (36) loved, thou *haddest* loved, he *hadde* loved; We, ye, they, *hadden* loved.

The Auxiliary *To ben* was also a complete Verb, and being prefixed to the Participle of the Past time,

(35) *Shulde* and *Wolde* are contracted from *Shulled*, and *Wolled*, by transposing the *d*, according to method 2.

Mighte and *Moughte* are formed from *maghed* and *moghed*, according to method 3. *Maghed, maghde, maghte; Moghed, moghde, moghte.*

Coude is from *conned*, by transposition of the *d*, and softening the *n* into *u*. It is often written *couthe*, and always so, I believe, when it is used as a Participle. In the same manner Bishop Douglas, and other Scottish writers, use *Begouth* as the Præterit of *Begin*. *Begonned, begonde, begoude, begouthe.*

(36) *Hadde* is contracted from *Haved*, as *made* is from *maked*. See Hickes, Gram. Fr. Th. p. 66.

with the help of the other Auxiliary Verbs, supplied the place of the whole Passive voice, for which the Saxon language had no other form of expression. I *am*, thou *art*, he *is* loved; We, ye, they, *aren*, or *ben* loved. I *was*, thou *wast*, he *was* loved; We, ye, they *weren* loved (37).

5. With respect to the indeclinable parts of Speech, it will be sufficient to observe here, that many of them still remained pure Saxon: the greatest number had undergone a slight change of a letter or two; and the more considerable alterations, by which some had been disfigured, were fairly deducible from that propensity to abbreviation, for which the inhabitants of this island have been long

(37) The Verb *To do* is considered by Wallis, and other later Grammarians, as an Auxiliary Verb. It is so used, though very rarely, by Chaucer. [See v. 14742,4.] He more commonly uses it transitively: [v. 10074. Do stripen me. *Faites me depouiller.*— v. 10075. Do me drenche. *Faites me noyer.*] but still more frequently to save the repetition of a verb. [v. 269.

His eyen twinkeled in his hed aright,
As DON the sterres in a frosty night.]

Dr. Hickes has taken notice that *do* was used in this last manner by the Saxons: [Gr. A. S. p. 77.] and so was *faire* by the French, and indeed is still. It must be confessed, that the exact power, which *do*, as an auxiliary, now has in our language, is not easy to be defined, and still less to be accounted for from analogy.

remarkable, though perhaps not more justly so than their neighbours.

§ IV. Such was, in general, the state of the Saxon part of the English language when Chaucer began to write: let us now take a short view of the accessions, which it may be supposed to have received at different times from Normandy.

As the language of our Ancestors was complete in all its parts, and had served them for the purposes of discourse and even of composition in various kinds, long before they had any intimate acquaintance with their French neighbours, they had no call from necessity, and consequently no sufficient inducement, to alter its original and radical constitutions, or even its customary forms. Accordingly, we have just seen, that, in all the essential parts of Speech, the characteristical features of the Saxon idiom were always preserved; and we shall see presently, that the crowds of French words, which from time to time were imported, were themselves made subject, either immediately or by degrees, to the laws of that same idiom.

§ V. The words, which were thus imported, were chiefly Nouns Substantive, Adjectives, Verbs, and Participles. The Adverbs, which are derived from French Adjectives, seem to have been formed from

them after they were Anglicised, as they have all the Saxon termination *lich* or *ly* (38), instead of the French *ment*. As to the other indeclinable parts of Speech, our language, being sufficiently rich in its own stores, has borrowed nothing from France, except perhaps an Interjection or two.

The Nouns Substantive in the French language (as in all the other languages derived from the Latin) had lost their Cases long before the time of which we are treating; but such of them as were naturalized here, seem all to have acquired a Genitive case, according to the corrupted Saxon form, which has been stated above. Their Plural number was also new modelled to the same form, if necessary; for in Nouns ending in *e* feminine, as the greater part of the French did, the two languages were already agreed. Nom. *Flour*. Gen. *Floures*. Plur. *Floures*. Nom. *Dame*. Gen. *Dames*. Plur. *Dames*.

On the contrary, the Adjectives, which at home had a distinction of Gender and Number, upon their naturalization here, seem to have been generally stript of both, and reduced to the simple state of

(38) As *rarely, continually, veraily, bravely*, &c. which correspond to the French adverbs, rarement, continuellement, veraiment, bravement, &c.

the English Adjective, without Case, Gender, or Number.

The French Verbs were obliged to lay aside all their differences of Conjugation. *Accorder, souffrir, recevoir, descendre,* were regularly changed into—*accorden, suffren, receiven, descenden.* They brought with them only two Tenses, the Present and the Past; nor did they retain any singularity of Inflexion, which could distinguish them from other Verbs of Saxon growth.

The Participle indeed of the Present time, in some Verbs, appears to have still preserved its original French form; as, *usant, suffisant,* &c.

The Participle of the Past time adopted, almost universally, the regular Saxon termination in *ed;* as *accorded, suffred, received, descended.* It even frequently assumed the prepositive Particle ȝe, (or y, as it was latterly written,) which, among the Saxons, was very generally, though not peculiarly, prefixed to that Participle.

§ VI. Upon the whole, I believe it may be said with truth, that, at the time which we are considering, though the form of our Language was still Saxon, the matter was in a great measure French. The novelties of all kinds, which the Revolution in

1066 had introduced, demanded a large supply of new terms; and our Ancestors very naturally took what they wanted, from the Language which was already familiar to a considerable part of the Community. Our Poets in particular, who have generally the principal share in modelling a Language, found it their interest to borrow as many words as they conveniently could from France. As they were for a long time chiefly Translators, this expedient saved them the trouble of hunting for correspondent terms in Saxon. The French words too, being the remains of a polished language, were smoother and slid easier into metre than the Saxon, which had never undergone any regular cultivation: their final syllables chimed together with more frequent consonancies, and their Accents were better adapted to Riming Poetry. But more of this in the next Part.

PART THE THIRD.

BEFORE we proceed in the third and last part of this Essay, in which we are to consider the Versification of Chaucer, it may be useful to premise a few observations upon the state of English Poetry antecedent to his time.

§ I. That the Saxons had a species of writing,

which differed from their common prose, and was considered by themselves as Poetry (39), is very certain; but it seems equally certain, that their compositions of that kind were neither divided into verses of a determinate number of syllables, nor embellished with what we call Rime (40). There are no

(39) The account which Beda has given of Cædmon [Eccl. Hist. l. iv. c. 24.] is sufficient to prove this. He repeatedly calls the compositions of Cædmon *carmina—poemata*—and in one place, *versus:* which words in the Saxon translations are rendered, Leoþ,—Leoþ ꝑonȝeꝛ, or ꝑonȝeꝛ—and ꝓeꝛꝛ: and *ars canendi* is translated, Leoþ cꝛæꝛꝛ or ꝑanȝ cꝛæꝛꝛ.

Asser also, in his Life of Alfred, speaks of *Saxonica poemata* and *Saxonica carmina* [p. 16. 43.] and most probably the *Cantilenæ per successiones temporum detritæ*, which Malmesbury cites in his History, l. ii. p. 52. were in the Saxon language. The same writer [l. v. de Pontif. edit. Gale.] mentions a *Carmen triviale* of Aldhelm (the author of the Latin Poem *de Virginitate*, who died in 709,) as *adhuc vulgo cantitatum ;* and he quotes the testimony of King Alfred, in his *Liber manualis*, or *Hand-boc*, as saying, " that no one was ever equal to Aldhelm in English Poetry."

(40) Both these circumstances are evident from the most cursory view of the several specimens of Saxon Poetry, which Hickes has exhibited in his Gram. Ang. Sax. c. xxi. and they are allowed by that learned writer himself. Unwilling however, as it should seem, to leave his favourite language without some system of versification, he supposes, that the Saxons observed the quantity of syllables in their verses, " though perhaps," he adds, " not so strictly as the Heroic Greek and Latin poets."

He gives three reasons for this supposition. 1. Because they

traces, I believe, to be found of either Rime or Metre in our language, till some years after the

did not use Rime. 2. Because they transposed their words in such an unnatural manner. "Hoc autem cur facerent Anglo-Saxonum Poetæ, nulla, ut videtur, alia assignari causa potest, quam quæ, ut idem facerent, Græcos et Latinos poetas coegit; nempe Metri Lex." 3. Because they had a great number of dissyllable and polysyllable words, which were fit for metrical feet.

However specious these reasons may appear, they are certainly far from conclusive, even if we had no monuments of Saxon Poetry remaining; but in the present case, I apprehend, the only satisfactory proof would have been to have produced, out of the great heap of Poetical compositions in the Saxon language, some regular metrical verses; that is, some portions of words, similar to each other in the nature and order of their component syllables, and occurring either in a continued series, or at stated intervals. If all external proofs of the nature of the Roman Poetry were lost, a few verses of Virgil or Horace would be sufficient to convince us, that their metres were regulated by the quantity of syllables; and if Cædmon had really written in a metre regulated by the quantity of syllables, a few of his lines must have afforded us the same conviction with respect to the general laws of his versification.

For my own part, I confess myself unable to discover and material distinction of the Saxon Poetry from Prose, except a greater pomp of diction, and a more stately kind of march.

Our ancestors affected a certain pomp of style in all their compositions. Angli (says Malmesbury, l. i. p. 13.) *pompatice* dictare amant. And this affectation, I suspect, was the true cause of their so frequently inverting the natural order of their words, especially in Poetry. The obscurity arising from these inversions had

Conquest; so that I should apprehend we must have been obliged for both to the Normans, who

the appearance of Pomp. That they were not owing to the constraint of any metrical Laws (as Hickes supposes) may be presumed from their being commonly used in Prose, and even in Latin Prose, by Saxon writers. Ethelwerd, an Historian descended in the fifth degree from King Ethelred [inter Script. post Bedam, p. 831—850.], is full of them. The following passage of his history, if literally translated, would read very like Saxon Poetry. "Abstrahuntur tunc | ferventes fide | anno in eodem | Hibernia stirpe | tres viri lecti: | furtim consuunt lembum | taurinis byrsis; | alimentum sibi | hebdomadarium supplent; | elevant dies | per vela septem totidemque noctes, &c."

We do not see any marks of studied alliteration in the old Saxon Poetry; so that we might attribute the introduction of that practice to the Danes, if we were certain, that it made a part of the Scaldic versification at the time of the Danish settlements in England.

However that may have been, Giraldus Cambrensis [Descr. Camb. p. 889.] speaks of *Annomination*, which he describes to be what we call *Alliteration*, as the favourite rhetorical figure of both the Welsh and English in his time. "Adeo igitur hoc verborum ornatu duæ nationes, Angli scil. et Cambri, in omni sermone exquisito utuntur, ut nihil ab his eleganter dictum, nullum nisi rude et agreste censeatur eloquium, si non schematis hujus limâ plene fuerit expolitum." It is plain that Alliteration must have had very powerful charms for the ears of our ancestors, as we find that the Saxon Poetry, by the help of this embellishment alone, even after it had laid aside its pompous phraseology, was able to maintain itself, without Rime or Metre, for several centuries. See Dr. Percy's Essay on the Metre of Pierce Plowman's Visions. Rel. of antient Poetry, vol. ii.

very early (41) distinguished themselves by poetical performances in their Vulgar tongue.

(41) I cannot find that the French Antiquaries have been able to produce any Poetry, in any of the dialects of their language, of an earlier date than the Conquest of England, or indeed than the beginning of the XIIth century. However we read of a Thibaud de Vernun, Canon of Rouen, who, before the year 1053, " multorum gesta Sanctorum, sed et S^{ti} Wandregesili, a suâ latinitate transtulit, atque in communis linguæ usum satis facunde refudit, ac sic, *ad quamdam tinnuli rythmi similitudinem, urbanas ex illis cantilenas edidit.* [De Mirac. S^{ti} Vulframni. Auctore Monacho Fontanell. tempt. Will. I. ap. Dacherii Acta SS. Ord. Ben. t. iii. p. 379.] It is probable too, that the " *vulgares cantus,*" which, according to Raimond de Agiles [Gesta Dei, p. 180.], were composed against Arnoulph, a Chaplain of the Duke of Normandy, in the first Croisade, were in the French language; and there can be little doubt that William IX. Duke of Aquitain, upon his return from Jerusalem in 1101, made use of his native tongue, when " *miserias captivitatis suæ, ut erat jocundus et lepidus, multotiens retulit rythmicis versibus cum facetis modulationibus.*" Ord. Vital. l. x. p. 793. The History of the taking of Jerusalem, which is said to have been written by the Chevalier Gregoire Bechada, of Tours in Limoges, " *maternâ linguâ, rythmo vulgari, ut populus pleniter intelligeret,*" [Labbe, Bibl. Nov. t. ii. p. 296.] has not been brought to light; so that probably the oldest French poem of any length now extant is a translation of the *Bestiarius* by Philippe de Thaun, it being addressed to Aliz (Adeliza of Louvain) the second Queen of our Henry I.

There is a copy of this Poem among the *Cotton* Mss. Nero. A. v. The authors of the *Histoire Literaire de la France*, t. ix. p. 173—90. suppose it to have been written about 1125, that is,

The Metres which they used, and which we seem to have borrowed from them, were plainly copied from the Latin(42) rythmical verses, which, in the

thirty years before *Le Brut*, which Fauchet had placed at the head of his list of French Poems.

I shall take occasion in another place to shew, that the real author of *Le Brut* was Wace (the same who wrote the *Roman de Rou*,) and not Wistace, as Fauchet calls him.

(42) The Latin Rythmical verses resembled the Metrical in the number of syllables only, without any regard to quantity. "Arma cano virumque qui primus Trojæ ab oris" would pass for a very good Rythmical Hexameter. The greatest part however of these compositions were in imitation of the Iambic and Trochaic metres; and in them, if the Accents fell luckily, the unlearned ear would often be as well pleased as if the laws of Quantity were observed. The two Rythmical Hymns quoted by Beda [De Metris, edit. Putsch. p. 2380.] are sufficient to prove this. The first, he observes, "*ad instar Iambici metri pulcherrime factus est.*"

O rex æterne Domine
Rerum creator omnium, &c.

The other is "*ad formam metri Trochaici.*"

Apparebit repentina dies magna Domini
Fur obscurâ velut nocte improvisos occupans.

In the former of these Hymns, "*Domine,*" to a modern ear at least, sounds as well as "*nomine;*" and in the latter, "*dies*" and "*velut,*" being accented upon their first Syllables, affect us no otherwise than "*dices*" and "*velum*" would have done.

From such Latin Rythms, and chiefly those of the Iambic form, the present Poetical measures of all the nations of Roman Europe are clearly derived. Instead of long and short Syllables, the Feet of our Poetry are composed of Syllables accented and

declension of that language, were current in various forms among those, who either did not understand, or did not regard, the true quantity of syllables; and the practice of Riming (43) is probably to be

unaccented, or rather of Syllables strongly and less strongly accented; and hence it is, that we have so little variety of Feet, and consequently of Metres; because the possible combinations of Syllables accented and unaccented are, from the nature of speech, much more limited in point of number, than the combinations of long and short Syllables were in the Greek and Latin languages.

(43) We see evident marks of a fondness for Rime in the Hymns of S. Ambrosius and S. Damasus, as early as the fourth Century. One of the Hymns of Damasus, which begins,

" Martyris ecce dies Agathæ
Virginis emicat eximiæ," &c.

is regularly rimed throughout. Prudentius, who had a more classical taste, seems studiously to have avoided Rimes; but Sedulius and Fortunatus, in the fifth and sixth Centuries, use them frequently in their Hymns. See their works, and a Hymn of the latter ap. Fabric. Bib. Med. Ætat. v. FORTUNATUS.

The learned Muratori, in his Dissertation *de Rythmicâ Veterum Poesi*, [Antiq. Med. Ævi, Dissert. xl.] has collected together a vast heap of examples, which prove that Rimes were very generally used in Hymns, Sequences, and other religious compositions in Latin, in the VIIth, VIIIth, and IXth Centuries; so that for my own part I think it as probable, that the Poets in the vulgar languages (who first appeared about the IXth Century) borrowed their Rimes from the Latin Poetry of that age, as it is evident that they did the forms of their versification.

Otfrid of Weissenberg, the earliest Rimer that is known in any of the modern Languages, about the year 870, calls Rime, in the style of the Latin Grammarians, *Schema omœoteleuton* [Præf. ad

deduced from the same original, as we find that practice to have prevailed in Ecclesiastical Hymns, and other compositions, in Latin, some centuries before Otfrid of Weissenberg, the first known Rimer in any of the vulgar European dialects.

§ II. I wish it were in my power to give a regular history of the progress which our Ancestors made in this new style of versification; but (44),

Liutbert. ap. Schilter. Thes. Antiq. Teuton, t. i. p. 11.] And when the Monk, who has been cited in n. 41. says, that Thibaud de Vernun composed his Songs "*ad quamdam tinnuli rythmi similitudinem*," he must mean, I think, that he composed them "in imitation of [Latin] jingling Rythm." I say, *Latin*, or at least some *foreign*, Rythm, because otherwise he would rather have said *in rythmo tinnulo*. The addition of the epithet *tinnulus* seems to shew plainly enough, that *Rythmus* alone did not then signify what we call *Rime*.

(44) William of Malmesbury [de Gest. Pont. Angl. l. iii. p. 271.] has preserved two Riming verses of Aldred, Archbishop of York, which that Prelate threw out against one Urse, Sheriff of Worcestershire, not long after the Conquest. "Hatest thou Urse—Have thou God's curse." "*Vocaris Ursus—Habeas Dei maledictionem.*" Malmesbury says, that he inserts this English, "*quod Latina verba non sicut Anglica concinnitati respondent.*" The Concinnity, I suppose, must have consisted in the Rime, and would hardly have been thought worth repeating, if Rime in English had not then been a novelty.

The lines in the Saxon Chronicle, to which I mean to refer, are in p. 191. ed. Gibs. The passage begins,

Eaꝛtelaꝛ he leꝛt ꝑyꝛcean.
ꝛeaꝛme men ꝛꝑiðe ꝛꝑencean—

All the lines are not in Rime; but I shall set down a few, in

except a few lines in the Saxon Chronicle upon the death of William the Conquerour, which seem to have been intended for verses of the Modern fashion, and a short Canticle, which, according to Matthew Paris (45), the blessed Virgin was pleased

English characters, which I think could not have chimed together so exactly by mere accident.

Thet he nam be rihte
And mid mycelan un-rihte
Of his leode
For littelre neode—
He sætte mycel deor-frith,
And he lægde laga ther with—
He forbead tha heortas,
Swylce eac tha baras;
Swa swithe he lufode tha hea-deor
Swylce he wære heora fæder.
Eac he sætte be tham haran,
That hi mosten freo faran—

The concluding lines are,

Se æl-mihtiga God
Kithe his saule mild-heortnisse
And do him his synna forgifenesse.

The writer of this part of the Chronicle (as he tells us himself, p. 189.) had *seen* the Conquerour.

(45) Hist. Angl. p. 100. Godric died in 1170, so that, according to tradition, the Canticle was prior to that period. The first Stanza being incorrectly printed, I shall only transcribe the last.—

Seinte Marie, Christes bur,
Meidenes clenhad, moderes flur,
Dilie mine sennen, rixe in min mod,
Bringe me to winne with selfe God—

to dictate to Godric, an Hermite near Durham, I have not been able to discover any attempts at Riming Poetry, which can with probability be referred to an earlier period than the reign of Henry the Second. In that reign Layamon (46), a Priest

Hoc Canticum (says M. P.) *potest hoc modo in Latinum transferri.*

Sancta Maria, Christi thalamus,
virginalis puritas, matris flos,
dele mea crimina, regna in mente med,
duc me ad fælicitatem cum solo Deo.

Upon the authority of this translation I have altered *pinne* (as it is in the print) to *winne*. The Saxon p is often mistaken for a p.

(46) This work of Layamon is extant among the Cotton Mss. Cal. A. ix. A much later copy, in which the author, by a natural corruption, was called *Laweman*, was destroyed by the fire. There is an account of both copies in Wanley's Cat. Mss. Septent. p. 228. and p. 237.

The following short extract from fol. 7, 8. containing an account of the Sirens, which Brutus met with in his voyage, will serve to support what is said in the text of this Author's intermixing Rimes with his prose.

Ther heo funden the Merminnen,
That beoth deor of muchele ginnen.
Wismen hit thunchet ful iwis,
Bineothe thon gurdle hit thunceth fisc,
Theos habbeth swa murie song,
Ne beo tha dai na swa long,
Ne bith na man weri
Heora songes to heran—

of Ernleye, near Severn, as he calls himself, translated (chiefly) from the French of Wace (47) a fabulous history of the Britons, entitled "Le Brut,"

(47) The French Clerk, whom Layamon professes to have followed in his history, is called by Wanley [Cat. Mss. Sept. p. 228.] *Wate;* as if poor *Maistre Wace* were doomed to have his name perpetually mistaken. Fauchet, and a long string of French Antiquaries, have agreed to call him *Wistace.* I shall here, in justice to *Maistre Wace,* (for whom I have a great respect, not only as a very antient but as a very ingenious Rimer,) state my reasons shortly for believing, that he was the real author of that translation in French verse of Geffrey of Monmouth's Romance, which is commonly called *Le Brut.*

In the first place his name is distinctly written in the text of three Mss. of very considerable antiquity. Two of them are in the Museum, viz. *Cotton.* Vitell. A. x. and *Reg.* 13 A. xxi. The third is at Cambridge, in the Library of Bennet College, n. 58. In a fourth Ms. also in the Museum, *Harl.* 6508. it is written *Gasce,* and *Gace,* by a substitution of G for W, very usual in the French language.

Secondly, in the Ms. abovementioned of Layamon's history Cal. A. ix. if I may trust my own eyes, the name is *Wace;* and not *Wate,* as Wanley read it. The Saxon ꞇ is not very unlike a c. What Layamon has said further, "that this Wace was a French Clerk, and presented his book to Alienor, the Queen of Henry" [the Second,] agrees perfectly well with the date of *Le Brut* (in 1155, according to all the copies) and with the account which Wace himself, in his *Roman de Rou,* has given of his attachment to Henry.

Thirdly, in a subsequent translation of *Le Brut,* which was made by Robert of Brunne in the beginning of the XIVth Century, he repeatedly names *Mayster Wace,* as the author (or rather

which Wace himself, about the year 1155, had translated from the Latin of Geffrey of Monmouth. Though the greatest part of this work of Layamon resemble the old Saxon Poetry, without Rime or

translator from the Latin) of the French History. See *Hearne's* App. to Pref. to *Peter Langtoft*, p. xcviii.

In opposition to this strong evidence in favour of *Wace*, we have nothing material, except the Ms. of *Le Brut* quoted by Fauchet [*de la Langue Françoise*, l. ii.], in which, according to his citation, the author is called *Wistace*. The later French writers, who have called him so, I apprehend, have only followed Fauchet. The Reader will judge, whether it is not more probable, that the writer of the Ms. or even Fauchet himself, may nave made a little slip in this matter, than that so many Mss. as I have quoted above, and the successive testimonies of LAYAMON and ROBERT OF BRUNNE, should have concurred in calling the author of *Le Brut* WACE, if that had not been his true name.

I will just add, that *La vie de Seint Nicholas*, which is frequently quoted by *Hickes* [Gr. A. S. p. 146. 149. et al.], was probably a work of this same *Wace*, as appears from the following passage. [Ms. Bodl. 1687. v. 17. from the end.]

Ci faut le livre *mestre Guace*,
Qil ad de Seint Nicholas fait,
De Latin en Romaunz estreit
A Osberd le fiz Thiout,
Qui Seint Nicholas mout amout.—

And I should suspect, that *Le Martyre de St. George en vers François par Robert Guaco*, mentioned by M. Lebeuf as extant in the Bibl. Colbert. Cod. 3745 [Mem. de l'Acad. D. J. et B. L. t. xvii. p. 731.] ought to be ascribed to the same author, as *Guaco* is a very strange name. The Christian name of Wace was *Robert*. See Huet, Orit. de Caen, p. 412.

metre, yet he often intermixes a number of short verses, of unequal lengths but riming together pretty exactly, and in some places he has imitated not unsuccessfully the regular octosyllable measure of his French original.

§ III. It may seem extraordinary, after these proofs, that the art of Riming was not unknown or unpractised in this country in the time of Henry II. that we should be obliged to search through a space of above a hundred years, without being able to meet with a single maker of English Rimes, whom we know to have written in that interval. The case I suspect to have been this. The scholars of that age (and there were many who might fairly be called so, in the English dominions abroad (48) as well as at home) affected to write only (49) in Latin,

(48) The following passage of Roger de Hoveden [p. 672.] gives a striking description of the extent of the English dominions in the time of Richard I. *Sciendum est quod tota terra, quæ est ab Anglia usque in Hispaniam, secus mare, videlicet Normannia, Britannia, Pictavia, est de dominio Regis Angliæ.* The Kings of France at that time were not possessed of an inch of territory upon the coasts of the Ocean.

(49) It will be sufficient to name John of Salisbury, Peter of Blois, Joseph of Exeter, Gerald Barry, Nigell Wireker, Geffrey Vinsauf. I should add to this list Walter Map, if there were not a tradition, not entirely destitute of probability, that he was the author of the *Roman de Saint Graal* in French. I find this

so that we do not find that they ever composed, in verse or prose, in any other language. On the other hand they, who meant to recommend themselves by their Poetry to the favour of the great, took care to write in French, the only language which their patrons understood; and hence it is, that we see so many French poems (50), about that

in an old Ms. of Tristan, Bib. Reg. 20. D. ii. p. antep. *Quant Boort ot conte laventure del Saint Graal, teles come eles estoient avenues, eles furent mises en escrit, gardees en lamere de Salibieres, dont Mestre Galtier Maplestrest a faire son livre du Saint Graal, por lamor du roy Herri son sengnor, qui fist lestorie tralater del Latin en Romanz.* The adventure of the *Saint Graal* is plainly written upon a very different plan from the other Romances of the Round Table, and is likely enough to have come from an Ecclesiastick, though rather, I confess, from a graver one than Walter Map may be supposed to have been. The French Romance, from which our Romance called "*Mort d'Arthur*" is translated, seems to be an injudicious jumble of *Le Brut*, *Lancelot*, *Tristan*, the *Saint Graal*, and some other Romances of less note, which were all, I apprehend, originally separate works.

(50) *Le Bestiaire*, by *Philippe de Thaun*, addressed to Queen Adelisa; *Le Brut* and *Le Roman de Rou*, by *Wace*, have been mentioned above. Besides the *Roman de Rou*, there is another Chronicle of Normandy in French verse by *Maitre Beneit*, compiled by order of Henry II. Ms. *Harl.* 1717. The same *Beneit* was, perhaps, the author of the *Vie de St. Thomas*, Ms. *Harl.* 3775. though he there calls himself

"*Frere Beneit, le pecheour,*
ove les neirs dras"—

At the end of a copy of *Le Brut*, Bib. *Reg.* 13 A. xxi. there is

time, either addressed directly to the principal persons at the English court, or at least written on such subjects as we may suppose to have been most likely to engage their attention. Whatever therefore of English Poetry was produced, in this infancy of the art, being probably the work of illiterate authors and circulating only among the vulgar (51), we need not be much surprised that no more of it has been transmitted down to posterity.

a Continuation of the History to the death of William II. in the same Metre, by a *Geffrei Gaimar*, which escaped the observation of Mr. Casley; and at the end of another copy, *Vitell.* A. x. the History is continued by an anonymous author to the accession of King John.

Richard I. composed himself in French. A specimen of his Poetry has been published by Mr. Walpole, Cat. of Royal Authors, v. i. And his Chancellor, William Bishop of Ely (who, as has been observed before, "was totally ignorant of the English language"), was by no means behind hand with his Master in his encouragement of French Poets; for of this Bishop the passage in Hoveden is to be understood, which Mr. Walpole has applied to the King himself. It is part of a letter of Hugh Bishop of Coventry, who, speaking of the *Bishop of Ely*, says, that HE, "*ad augmentum et famam sui nominis, emendicata carmina et rythmos adulatorios comparabat, et* de regno Francorum *cantores et joculatores muneribus allexerat, ut de illo canerent in plateis; et jam dicebatur ubique, quod non erat talis in orbe.*" Hoveden, p. 103.

(51) To these causes we may probably impute the loss of those Songs upon Hereward (the last perhaps of the Saxon heroes,) which, according to Ingulphus, "were sung about the streets"

§ IV. The learned Hickes, however, has pointed out to us two very curious pieces, which may with probability be referred to this period. The first of them is a Paraphrase of the Gospel Histories, entitled *Ormulum* (52), by one *Orm*, or *Ormin*. It

in his time. Hist. Croyl. p. 68. Robert of Brunne also mentions "a Rime" concerning Gryme the Fisher, the founder of Grymesby; Hanelok the Dane; and his wife Goldeburgh, daughter to a King Athelwold; who all now, together with their bard,

— illacrymabiles
Urgentur ignotique longâ
Nocte.—

See translation of Peter of Langtoft, p. 25. and Camden's Brit. p. 569.

(52) The Ormulum seems to be placed by Hickes among the first writings after the Conquest [Gram. Ang. Sax. c. xxii. p. 165.], but, I confess, I cannot conceive it to have been earlier than the reign of Henry II. There is a peculiarity in the author's orthography, which consists in doubling the Consonants; e. g. brother, he writes, *brotherr*; after, *afterr*, &c. He has done this by design, and charges those who shall copy his book to be very careful to write those letters twice, which he has written so, as otherwise, he assures them, "they will not write the word right." Hickes has taken notice of this peculiarity, but has not attempted to explain the author's reasons for it; and indeed, without a more perfect knowledge than we now probably can have of the Saxon pronunciation, they seem totally inexplicable. In the few lines, which I think it necessary to quote here as a specimen of the Metre, I shall venture (first begging Ormin's pardon for disregarding his injunction) to leave out the superfluous letters, and I shall also for my own ease as well as that of

seems to have been considered as mere Prose by Hickes and by Wanley, who have both given large extracts from it; but, I apprehend, every reader, who has an ear for metre, will easily perceive that it is written very exactly in verses of fifteen syllables, without Rime, in imitation of the most common species of the Latin Tetrameter Iambic. The other

the reader transcribe them in modern characters. The first lines of Wanley's extract from Ms. *Bod.* Junius. I. [Cat. Codd. Mss. Septent. p. 59.] will answer my purpose as well as any other.

Nu, brother Walter, brother min after the fleshes kinde,
And brother min i Cristendom thurh fulluht and thurh trowthe,
And brother min i Godes hus yet o the thride wise,
Thurh that wit hafen taken ba an reghel boc to folghen
Under kanunkes-had and lif swa sum Sant Awstin sette,
Ic hafe don swa sum thu bad, and *forbed*[a] te thin wille,
Ic hafe wend intil English godspelles halighe lare,
After that little wit that me min Drihten hafeth lened—

The reader will observe, that, in calling these verses of fifteen syllables, I consider the words—*kinde, trowthe, wise, sette, wille, lare*—as dissyllables.

The laws of metre require that they should be so considered, as much as *folghen* and *lened*: and for the same reason *thride* in ver. 3 and *hafe* in ver. 6 and 7. are to be pronounced as consisting of two syllables.

It is the more extraordinary that neither Hickes nor Wanley should have perceived that Ormin wrote in metre, as he himself mentions his having added words for the sake of *filling* his *Rime*, or *Verse*, for he calls it by both those names in the following passages:

[a] r. *forthed*. Ms.

piece (53), which is a moral Poem upon old age, &c., is in Rime, and in a metre much resembling the former, except that the verse of fifteen syllables is broken into two, of which the first should regularly contain eight and the second seven syllables; but the metre is not so exactly observed, at least in the copy which Hickes has followed, as it is in the *Ormulum*.

§ V. In the next interval, from the latter end of the reign of Henry III. to the middle of the four-

Ic hafe sett her o this boc among Godspelles wordes
All thurh me selfen manig word, the *Rime* swa to *fillen*—

And again,

And ic ne mihte noht min *fers* ay with Godspelles wordes
Wel *fillen* all, and all forthi sholde ic wel ofte nede
Among Godspelles wordes don min word, min *fers* to *fillen*—

It is scarce necessary to remark, that *Rime* is here to be understood in its original sense, as denoting the whole verse, and not merely the consonancy of the final syllables. In the second quotation *fers*, or *verse*, is substituted for it as a synonymous term. Indeed I doubt whether, in the time of Ormin, the word *Rime* was, in any language, used singly to convey the idea of Consonant terminations.

(53) A large extract from this Poem has been printed by Hickes [Gram. Ang. Sax. c. xxiv. p. 222.], but evidently from very incorrect Mss. It begins thus:

Ic am nu elder thanne ic wes
A wintre and ec a lore;
Ic ealdi more thanne ic dede,
Mi wit oghte to bi more.

teenth century, when we may suppose Chaucer was beginning to write, the number of English Rimers seems to have increased very much. Besdies several, whose names we know (54), it is probable that a great part of the anonymous Authors, or rather

(54) Robert of Gloucester and Robert of Brunne have been mentioned already.

To these may be added Richard Rolle, the hermite of Hampole, who died in 1349, after having composed a large quantity of English rimes. See Tanner, Bib. Brit. Art. HAMPOLE.—Laurence Minot, who has left a collection of Poems upon the principal events of the former part of the reign of Edward III. Ms. *Cotton.* Galba. E. ix.—Within the same period flourished the two Poets, who are mentioned with great commendations by Robert of Brunne [App. to Pref. to Peter Langt. p. xcix.] under the names "Of Erceldoun and of Kendale." We have no memorial, that I know, remaining of the latter, besides this passage; but the former I take to have been the famous Thomas Leirmouth, of Ercildoun (or Ersilton, as it is now called, in the shire of Merch,) who lived in the time of Edward I. and is generally distinguished by the honourable addition of "The Rhymour." As the learned Editor of "Ancient Scottish Poems, Edinburgh, 1770," has, for irrefragable reasons, deprived this Thomas of a Prophecy in verse, which had usually been ascribed to him, [see Mackenzie, Art. THOMAS RHYMOUR.] I am inclined to make him some amends by attributing to him a Romance of "Sir Tristrem;" of which Robert of Brunne, an excellent judge! [in the place above cited] says,

Over gestes it has th'esteem,
Over all that is or was,
If men it sayd as made THOMAS.

Translators (55), of the popular Poems, which (from their having been originally written in the Roman,

(55) See Dr. Percy's curious *Catalogue of English Metrical Romances*, prefixed to the third Volume of *Reliques of ancient Poesy*. I am inclined to believe that we have no English Romance, prior to the age of Chaucer, which is not a translation or imitation of some earlier French Romance. The principal of those, which, being built upon English stories, bid the fairest for having been originally composed in English, are also extant in French. A considerable fragment of *Hornchild*, or *Dan Horn* as he is there called, is to be found in French Alexandrines in Ms. *Harl.* 527. The first part of *Guy of Warwick* is in French, in the octosyllable metre, in Ms. *Harl.* 3775. and the last part in the same language and metre in Ms. Bib. *Reg.* 8 F. ix. How much may be wanting I have not had opportunity to examine. I have never seen *Bevis* in French; but Du Fresnoy, in his *Biblioth. des Romans*, t. ii. p. 241. mentions a Ms. of *Le Roman de Beuves de Hantonne*, and another of *Le Roman de Beuves et Rosiane, en Rime*; and the Italians, who were certainly more likely to borrow from the French than from the English language, had got among them a Romance *di Buovo d'Antona* before the year 1348. Quadrio, Storia della Poesia, t. vi. p. 542.

However, I think it extremely probable that these three Romances, though originally written in French, were composed in England, and perhaps by Englishmen; for we find that the general currency of the French language here engaged several of our own countrymen to use it in their compositions. Peter of Langtoft may be reckoned a dubious instance, as he is said by some to have been a Frenchman; but Robert Grosseteste, the famous Bishop of Lincoln in the time of Henry III. was a native of Suffolk, and yet he wrote his *Chasteau d'Amours*, and his *Manuel des Pechées* in French. [Tanner's Bib. Brit. and Hearne's

or French, language) were called Romances, flourished about this time. It is unnecessary to enter

Pref. to Rob. of Gloucester, p. lviii.]—There is a translation of *Cato* in French verse by *Helis de Guincestre*, i. e. Winchester, Ms. *Harl.* 4388. and a Romance also in French verse, which I suppose to be the original of the English *Ipomedon* [Percy's Cat. n. 22.] by *Hue de Rotelande*, is to be found in Ms. *Cotton.* Vesp. A. vii.—A French Dialogue in verse, Ms. *Bod.* 3904. entitled, "*La pleinte par entre mis Sire Henry de Lacy Counte de Nichole et Sire Wauter de Bybelesworth pur la croiserie en la terre Seinte*," was most probably composed by the latter, who has also left us another work in French prose. [See his article in Tanner, Bibl. Brit.]—Even as late as the time of Chaucer, Gower wrote his *Speculum meditantis* in French, but whether in verse or prose is uncertain. John Stowe, who was a diligent searcher after Mss. had never seen this work [Annals, p. 326.]: nor does either Bale or Pits set down the beginning of it, as they generally do of the books which they have had in their hands. However, one French Poem of Gower's has been preserved. In Ms. *Harl.* 3869. it is connected with the *Confessio Amantis* by the following rubric: "Puisqu'il ad dit cidevant en Englois par voie d'essample la sotie de cellui qui par amours aime par especial, dirra ore apres en Francois a tout le monde en general une traitie selonc les auctours, pour essampler les amants marriez, au fin q'ils la foi de leurs seints espousailles pourront par fine loialte guarder, et al honeur de dieu salvement tenir." Pr. *Le creatour de toute creature.* It contains LV Stanzas of 7 verses each, in the last of which is the following apology for the language:

"Al' universite de tout le monde
Johan Gower ceste Balade envoie,
Et si jeo nai de Francois la faconde,
Pardonetz moi qe jeo de ceo forsvoie;

into particulars here concerning any of them, as they do not appear to have invented, or imported from abroad, any new modes of Versification, by which the Art could be at all advanced (56), or

Jeo suis Englois, si quier par tiele voie
Estre excuse ——."

Chaucer himself seems to have had no great opinion of the performances of his countrymen in French. [Prol. to Test. of Love, ed. 1542.] "Certes (says he) there ben some that speke theyr poysy mater in Frenche, of whyche speche the Frenche men have as good a fantasye, as we have in hearing of French mennes Englyshe." And he afterwards concludes with his usual good sense. "Let then Clerkes endyten in Latyn, for they have the propertye of science and the knowinge in that facultye; and lette Frenchmen in theyr Frenche also endyte theyr queynt termes, for it is kyndly to theyr mouthes; and let us shewe our fantasyes in suche wordes as we lerneden of our dames tonge."

(56) It was necessary to qualify the assertion, that the Rimers of this period "did not invent or import from abroad any new modes of Versification," as, in fact, Robert of Brunne (in the passage referred to in n. 54.) has mentioned three or four sorts of verse, different from any which we have hitherto met with, and which appear to have been much cultivated, if not introduced, by the writers who flourished a little before himself. He calls them *Couwee, Strangere, Enterlace,* and *Baston.* Mr. Bridges, in a sensible letter to Thomas Hearne [App. to Pref. to Peter Langt. p. ciii.] pointed out these terms as particularly "needing an explanation;" but Thomas chose rather to stuff his book with accounts *of the Nunnery at Little Gidding,* &c. which cost him only the labour of transcribing. There can be little doubt, I think, that the Rimes called *Couwée* and *Enterlacée* were derived from

even to have improved those which were before in use. On the contrary, as their works were intended for the ear more than for the eye, to be recited rather than read, they were apt to be more

the *Versus Caudati* and *Interlaqueati* of the Latin Rimers of that age. Though Robert of Brunne in his Prologue professes not to attempt these elegancies of composition, yet he has intermixed several passages in Rime *Couwée*; [see p. 266. 273, 6, 7, 8, 9, et al.] and almost all the latter part of his work from the Conquest is written in Rime *Enterlacée*, each couplet riming in the middle as well as at the end. [This was the nature of the *Versus interlaqueati*, according to the following specimen, Ms. *Harl.* 1002.

Plausus Grecorum | lux cecis et via claudis |
Incola celorum | virgo dignissima laudis.]

I cannot pretend to define the exact form of the Rime called *Baston*, but I dare say it received its appellation from the Carmelite, *Robert Baston*, a celebrated Latin Rimer in the reigns of Edward I. and II. [See Tanner, Bibl. Brit. in v. and Hearne's Pref. to Fordun, p. ccxxvi. et seq.] His verses upon the battle of Bannockburn, in 1313, are printed in the Appendix to Fordun, p. 1570. They afford instances of all the whimsical combinations of Rimes which can well be conceived to find a place in the Latin heroic metre.

As to Rime *Strangere*, I suspect (upon considering the whole passage in Robert of Brunne) that it was rather a general name, including all sorts of *uncommon* Rimes, than appropriated to any particular species.

Upon the whole, if this account of these new modes of Versification shall be allowed to be any thing like the truth, I hope I shall be thought justified in having added, "that the Art could not be at all advanced by them."

attentive to their Rimes than to the exactness of their Metres, from a presumption, I suppose, that the defect, or redundance, of a syllable might be easily covered in the recitation, especially if accompanied, as it often was, by some musical instrument.

§ VI. Such was, in general, the state of English Poetry at the time when Chaucer probably made his first essays. The use of Rime was established; not exclusively (for the Author of the "Visions of Pierce Ploughman" wrote after the year 1350 (57)

(57) This is plain from fol. 68. edit. 1550. where the year 1350 is named, as a year of great scarcity. Indeed, from the mention of the Kitten in the tale of the Rattons, fol. iii. iiii. I should suspect that the author wrote at the very end of the reign of Edward III. when Richard was become heir apparent.

The Visions *of* (i. e. *concerning*) Pierce Ploughman are generally ascribed to one *Robert Langland.*; but the best Mss. that I have seen, make the Christian name of the author *William*, without mentioning his surname. So in Ms. *Cotton.* Vesp. B. xvi. at the end of p. 1. is this rubric. "Hic incipit secundus passus de visione *Willelmi* de Petro Plouhman." And in ver. 5. of p. 2. instead of, "*And sayde*; sonne, *slepest thou?*" The Ms. has, "*And sayde*; Wille, *slepest thou?*" See also the account of Ms. *Harl.* 2376. in the Harleian Catalogue.

I cannot help observing, that these Visions have been printed from so faulty and imperfect a Ms. that the author, whoever he was, would find it difficult to recognize his own work. However, the judgment of the learned Doctors, Hickes and Percy, [Gram. A. S. p. 217.—Rel. of Anc. Poet. v. ii. p. 260.] with respect to the laws of his versification, is confirmed by the Mss. Each of his

without Rime,) but very generally; so that in this respect he had little to do but to imitate his predecessors. The Metrical part of our Poetry was capable of more improvement, by the polishing of the measures already in use as well as by the introducing of new modes of versification; and how far Chaucer actually contributed to the improvement of it, in both or either of these particulars, we are now to consider.

§ VII. With respect to the regular Metres then

verses is in fact a distich, composed of two verses, after the Saxon form, without Rime, and not reducible to any certain Metre. I do not mean to say, that a few of his verses may not be picked out, consisting of fourteen and fifteen syllables, and resembling the metre used in the *Ormulum*; and there are still more of twelve and thirteen syllables, which might pass for very tolerable Alexandrines: but then, on the other hand, there is a great number of his verses (warranted for genuine by the best Mss.) which cannot, by any mode of pronunciation, be extended beyond nine or ten syllables; so that it is impossible to imagine, that his verse was intended to consist of any determinate number of syllables. It is as clear that his Accents, upon which the harmony of modern Rythms depends, are not disposed according to any regular system. The first division of a verse is often Trochaic, and the last Iambic; and *vice versâ*. The only rule, which he seems really to have prescribed to himself, is what has been taken notice of by his first Editor, viz. "to have three wordes at the leaste in every verse whiche beginne with some one letter." Crowley's Pref. to Edit. 1550.

in use, they may be reduced, I think, to four. First, the long Iambic Metre (58), consisting of not

(58) The most perfect example of this metre has been given above, n. 52, from the *Ormulum*. Each verse is composed of fifteen syllables, and broken by a *Cæsura* at the eighth, which always terminates a word. The accents are so disposed upon the even syllables, particularly the eighth and fourteenth, as to produce the true Iambic Cadence.

The learned reader will recollect, that the *Political verses*, as they are called, of Tzetzes, and others, who wrote when the Greek versification was become Rythmical instead of Metrical, are *chiefly* of this form. See Du Cange, v. POLITICI VERSUS. And it is remarkable, that, about the time of our Orm, Ciullo d'Alcamo, a Poet of Sicily, where the Greek was still a living language, [Montf. Palæog. Gr. l. vi.] made use of these verses of fifteen syllables, intermixed with Hendecasyllables, in the only production of his which has been preserved. Raccolta dell' Allacci, p. 408—16. The first Stanza is quoted by Crescimbeni, [Istor. d. V. P. l. i. p. 3.] who however labours very much to persuade us that the verses in question ought not to be considered as verses of fifteen syllables, but as containing each of them two verses, the one of eight and the other of seven syllables. If this were allowed, the nature of the verse would not be altered: [See before, p. 67.] but the supposition is highly improbable, as by that distribution there would be three verses in each Stanza not riming. In what follows, Crescimbini shews very plainly that he had not adverted to the real nature of Ciullo's measure, for he compares it with the noted tetrameter, "Gallias Cæsar subegit, Nicomedes Cæsarem," which is a *Trochaic*, whereas these verses of Ciullo are evidently *Iambics*, like those of Orm.

I suspect, that, if we could recover the genuine text of Robert of Gloucester, he would be found to have written in this Metre.

more than fifteen, nor less than fourteen syllables, and broken by a *Cæsura* at the eighth syllable. Secondly, the Alexandrin Metre (59), consisting of not

It was used by Warner, in his *Albions England* (another Chronicle in verse) in the latter end of Q. Elizabeth's reign; and Gascoigne about the same time [*Instruction concerning the making of verse in Eng.* Signature U. ii.) speaks of the couplet, consisting of one verse of twelve and another of fourteen syllables, as *the commonest sort of verse* then in use. It may be proper to observe, that the metre, which Gascoigne calls a verse of fourteen syllables, is exactly the same with what is called above a verse of fifteen syllables; just as the French Alexandrin may be composed indifferently of twelve or thirteen syllables, and the Italian Hendecasyllable of ten, eleven, or even twelve. The general rule in all these kinds of verse is, that, when they consist of the greater number of syllables, the superfluous syllables, as they may be called, are never accented.

(59) Robert of Brunne, in his translation of *Peter of Langtoft*, seems to have used the *Alexandrin* verse in imitation of his Original; but his Metre (at least in Hearne's copy) is frequently defective, especially in the latter part of his work, where he affects to rime at the *Cæsura* as well as at the end of his verse.

The Alexandrin metre is generally agreed to have been first used in the *Roman d'Alexandre*, by Lambert li Cors and Alexandre de Bernay, toward the latter end of the twelfth Century. Du Verdier, Bibl. p. 780. Fauchet, l. ii. A late French Antiquary (M. L'Eveque de la Ravaliere,) in his history *Des revolutions de la langue Françoise*, p. 165. has combated this opinion, upon the authority of some Alexandrin verses, which he has discovered, as he supposes, in the *Roman de Rou*. I shall only observe, that no such verses are to be found in a very good Ms. of the *Roman de Rou*, Bib. *Reg.* 4 C. xi. and I very much suspect

more than thirteen syllables, nor less than twelve, with a *Cæsura* at the sixth. Thirdly, the Octosyllable Metre; which was in reality the antient Dimeter Iambic. Fourthly, the Stanza of six verses; of which the first, second, fourth, and fifth, were in the complete Octosyllable Metre; and the third and last catalectic, i. e. wanting a syllable, or even two.

§ VIII. In the first of these Metres it does not appear that Chaucer ever composed at all, (for, I presume, no one can imagine that he was the author of Gamelyn,) or in the second; and in the

that upon an accurate examination they will appear to have been not the work of *Wace*, but of some later author. A similar mistake of an interpolation, or continuation, for the original work has led another very able Antiquary of the same nation to place the *Roman de Rou* in the fourteenth Century. Mem. de l'Acad. des I. et B. L. tom. xv. p. 582. There can be no doubt, that *Wace* wrote the *Roman de Rou* about the middle of the twelfth Century. See before, n. 47.

They who attend only to the length of the Alexandrin verse, will naturally derive it from the Trimeter Iambic rythms, which were in frequent use in the beginning of the twelfth Century. See Orderic. Vital. l. ii. p. 404. 409, 410. 415, et al. But when it is considered, that the *Cæsura* at the sixth syllable, so essential to the Alexandrin metre, was hardly ever observed in the Trimeter Iambic, it will seem more probable, I think, that the inventor of the Alexandrin took for his model, what has been called above, the long Iambic, but, for some reason or other, retrenched a foot, or two syllables, in the first hemistich.

fourth we have nothing of his but the Rime of Sire Thopas, which, being intended to ridicule the vulgar Romancers, seems to have been purposely written in their favourite Metre. In the third, or Octosyllable Metre (60), he has left several com-

(60) Though I call this the Octosyllable Metre from what I apprehend to have been its original form, it often consists of nine and sometimes of ten syllables; but the eighth is always the last accented syllable.

The oldest French poems, to the latter end of the twelfth Century, are all in this metre; but upon the invention of the Alexandrin, the octosyllable verse seems by degrees to have been confined to the several species of lighter compositions, in which it is still used. Here in England, Robert of Brunne, in his Preface to his translation of *Le Brut* [App. to Pref. to Peter Langtoft, p. c.] calls it "*light rime*," in contradistinction to "strange rime," of which he has just enumerated several sorts [see n. 56.]; and says, that he wrote in it "for luf of the lewed man:" and Chaucer himself speaks of it in nearly the same terms in the beginning of the third book of the *House of Fame*.

"God of science and of light,
Apollo, thurgh thy grete might
This little last book now thou gye;
Not that I will for maystrye
Here art potential be shewde;
But, for the ryme is *light and lewde*,
Yet make it somewhat agreable,
Though some verse fayle in a syllable."

The learned Editor of a part of the Canterbury Tales [London, 1737, 8vo.] has quoted this passage [Pref. p. xxv.] as proving, "by Chaucer's own confession, that he did not write in equal measure."

positions; particularly, "an imperfect Translation of the *Roman de la Rose*," which was, probably, one of his earliest performances; "the House of

It certainly proves, that he did not write in equal measure *in this particular poem* of the House of Fame; but it proves also, that he knew well what the laws of measure were, and that he thought that any deviation from them required an apology. Is it just to conclude, because Chaucer has owned a neglect of those laws in one work, written in light metre, and in which he formally disclaims any exertion of art [ver. 4, 5.] that therefore he has been equally negligent of them in his other works, written in the gravest metre, and in which he may reasonably be supposed to have employed his utmost skill of versification? In the Troilus, for instance, [b. v.] he has a solemn prayer, "that none miswrite, or *mismetre* his book." Can we suppose that it was not originally written in Metre?—But I shall not enter any further into the general argument concerning Chaucer's versification, which will more properly be discussed in the text. My business here was only to prevent the reader from coming to the question with a preconceived opinion (upon the authority of the learned Editor abovementioned) that "Chaucer himself," in this passage of the House of Fame, "has put the matter out of dispute."

To return again to the Octosyllable Metre. Its constitution is such, that the first syllable may often be dropped without much prejudice to the harmony of the verse; and as far as I have observed, that is the syllable in which Chaucer's verses of this kind generally fail. We have an instance in the first line of the passage quoted above—

God of science and of light—

sounds as well (to my ear at least) as—

Thou God of science and of light—

according to Mr. Urry's correction. The reason, I apprehend, is,

Fame;" "the Dethe of the Duchesse Blanche," and a poem called his "Dreme:" upon all which it will be sufficient here to observe in general, that, if he had given no other proofs of his poetical faculty, these alone must have secured to him the pre-eminence, above all his predecessors and contemporaries, in point of Versification.

§ IX. But by far the most considerable part of Chaucer's works is written in that kind of Metre which we now call the Heroic (61), either in Dis-

that the measure, though of another sort, is still regular: instead of a Dimeter Iambic, it is a Dimeter Trochaic Catalectic.

But no such liberty can be taken in the Heroic Metre without totally destroying its harmony; and therefore when the above-mentioned learned Editor says [Pref. p. xxvi.] that the numbers of Chaucer "are always musical, whether they want or exceed their complement," I doubt his partiality for his author has carried him too far. I have no conception myself that an heroic verse, which wants a syllable of its complement, can be musical, or even tolerable. The line which he has quoted from the Knightes Tale [ver. 1228 of this Edition],

Not in purgatory but in helle—

however you manage it; (whether you make a pause; or give two times to the first syllable, as he rather advises;)—can never pass for a verse of any form. Nor did Chaucer intend that it should. He wrote (according to the best Mss.)—

Not *only* in purgatory but in helle.

(61) The Heroic Metre with us, as with the Italians, is of the Iambic form, and consists of ten, eleven, or twelve syllables; the tenth, however, being in all cases the last accented syllable. The

tichs or in Stanzas; and as I have not been able to discover any instance of this metre being used by any English poet before him, I am much inclined to suppose that he was the first introducer of it into our language. It had long been practised in France, in the Northern as well as the Southern provinces; and in Italy, within the last fifty years

French have the same Metre; but with them it can scarce contain more than eleven syllables, as their language has few (if any) words, in which the accent is laid upon the Antepenultima. Though we have a great number of such words, we seldom use the verse of twelve syllables. The extraordinary difficulty of riming with three syllables is a sufficient reason for excluding it from all works which are written in Rime, and in Blank Metre the two unaccented syllables at the end make the close of the verse heavy and languid. Milton, for the sake of variety of measure, has inserted a very few of these verses, which the Italians call *Sdrucciolì*, in his heroic poems; but they are more commonly and, I think, more properly employed in Dramatic compositions, where a continued stateliness of numbers is less requisite.

The generical name for this Metre in Italy is *Endecasyllabo*; and the verses of ten and twelve syllables are distinguished by additions; the former being called *Endecasyllabo tronco*, and the latter *Endecasyllabo sdrucciolo*. This proves, I think, that the verse of eleven syllables was the primitive metre, and principally used, as it still is, in Italy; and it will appear hereafter, if I am not mistaken, that the greatest part of Chaucer's heroic verses, when properly written and pronounced, are in this measure.

A learned person, whose favours I have already acknowledged in the Gloss. v. GORE, *cannot acquiesce* in this notion, "that the greatest part of Chaucer's heroic verses, when properly written

before Chaucer wrote, it had been cultivated with the greatest assiduity and success, in preference to every other metre, by Dante, Petrarch, and Boccace. When we reflect that two of Chaucer's juvenile productions, the Palamon and Arcite, and the Troilus, were in a manner translated from the *Theseida* and the *Filostrato* of Boccace (62), both

and pronounced, are verses of eleven syllables;" and for a proof of the contrary he refers me particularly to the *Nonnes Preestes Tale*, ver. 14970, and the verses following and preceding. I am sorry that by an unguarded expression I should have exposed myself to a controversy, which can only be decided by a careful examination of the final syllables of between thirty and forty thousand lines. It would answer my purpose as well to say "*a great part*" instead of "*the greatest part*;" but in support of my first idea I must be permitted to observe, that I have carefully examined a hundred lines which precede, and as many which follow ver. 14970, and I find, that a clear majority of them, *as they are printed*, end in *e* feminine, and consequently, according to my hypothesis, have an eleventh syllable. I observe too, that several more *ought to have been printed* as ending with an *e* feminine; but whether the omission of it should be imputed to the defectiveness of the Mss. or to the negligence of the collator, I cannot be certain. See the concluding note of the Essay, &c. p. cliii. cliv.

(62) It is so little a while since the world has been informed, that the Palamon and Arcite of Chaucer was taken from the *Theseida* of Boccace, that it would not have been surprising if another century had elapsed without our knowing that our countryman had also borrowed his Troilus from the *Filostrato* of the same author; as the *Filostrato* is more scarce, and much less famous, even in Italy, than the *Theseida*. The first suspicion which I en-

written in the common Italian hendecasyllable verse, it cannot but appear extremely probable that his

tertained of this theft was from reading the title of the *Filostrato* at large, in *Saxii* Hist. Lit. Typog. Mediolan. *ad an.* 1498; and I afterwards found, in Montfaucon's Bibl. Mss. t. ii. p. 793. among the King of France's Mss. one with this title, "*Philostrato, dell' amorose fatiche di Troilo per Gio Boccaccio.*" See also Quadrio, t. vi. p. 473. I had just employed a person to procure me some account of this Ms. from Paris, when I had the good fortune to meet with a printed copy in the very curious Collection of the Reverend Mr. Crofts. The title is "Il Fylostrato, che tracta de lo innamoramento de Troylo e Gryseida: et de molte altre infinite battaglie. Impresso nella inclita cita de Milano per magistro Uldericho Scinzenzeler nell anno M. CCCC lxxxviii. a di xxvii. di mese de Septembre, in 4°." By the favour of the learned owner (who is as free in the communication, as he has been zealous in the collection, of his literary treasures) I had soon an opportunity of satisfying myself, that Chaucer was to the full as much obliged to Boccace in his Troilus as in his Knightes Tale.

The doubts which Quadrio mentions [t. vi. p. 474.], whether the *Filostrato* was really a work of Boccace, are sufficiently answered, as he observes, by the concurring testimony of several antient Mss. which expressly name him as the author. And it may be remarked that Boccace himself, in his Decameron, has made the same honourable mention of this Poem as of the *Theseida*; though without acknowledging either for his own. In the introduction to the Sixth Day, he says, that "Dioneo insieme con Lauretta *di Troilo et di Chriseida* cominciarono cantare," just as afterwards, in the conclusion of the Seventh Day, we are told, that the same "Dioneo et la Fiammetta gran pezza cantarono insieme *d'Arcita et di Palemone.*"

It may not be improper here to observe further, that a third poem, which is mentioned in the Decameron in the same manner

metre also was copied from the same original; and yet I cannot find that the form of his Stanza in the Troilus, consisting of seven verses, was ever used by Boccace, though it is to be met with among the poems of the King of Navarre, and of the *Provençal* Rimers (63). Whichever he shall

with the *Theseida* and the *Filostrato*, was also probably one of Boccace's own compositions. In the conclusion of the Third Day, it is said, that "Dioneo et la Fiammetta cominciarono a cantare *di Messer Guiglielmo et della dama del Vergiu.*" There is an old French Romance, upon this subject, as I apprehend, in Ms. Bodl. 2386. It is entitled *Le Romant de la Chastelaine du Vergy*, and begins thus:

Une maniere de gens sont
Qui d'estre loyaulx semblant font—
Ainsi qu'il avint en Bourgoigne
D'un chevalier preux et hardi
Et de la dame du Vergy.——

The story is the same, in the main, with that of the 70th Novel in the Heptameron of the Queen of Navarre, from which, I suppose, the more modern *Histoire de la Comtesse du Vergi*, Par. 1722, is taken.

I cannot find that any Italian poem upon this subject is now extant; but the unaccountable neglect, with which the poetry of Boccace has been long treated by those very countrymen of his who idolize his prose, makes the supposition, I think, not improbable, that a small piece of this sort may have been suffered to perish, or even to lurk at this day, unpublished and unnoticed, in some Italian library.

(63) See *Poesies du Roi de Navarre*, Chans. xvi. xviii. xxvii. xxxiii. lviii. The only difference is, that the two last verses, which

be supposed to have followed, whether the French or Italians, it is certain that he could not want in either language a number of models of correct and harmonious versification; and the only question will be, whether he had ability and industry enough to imitate that part of their excellency.

§ X. In discussing this question we should always have in mind, that the correctness and harmony of an English verse depends entirely upon

in Chaucer's Stanza form a distinct couplet, are made by Thibaut to rime with the first and third. In a Ms. of Provençal poetry (in the Collection of the Reverend Mr. Crofts), I find one piece by Folket de Marseilles, who died about 1213, in which the Stanza is formed exactly agreeable to Chaucer's.

This Stanza of seven verses, being first introduced, I apprehend, by Chaucer, was long the favourite measure of the Poets who succeeded him. In the time of Gascoigne it had acquired the name of *Rithme royall; and surely*, says he, *it is a royall kinde of verse serving best for grave discourses.* [Instruction concerning the making of verse. Sign. U. 1. b.] Milton, in some of his juvenile compositions, has made the last verse of this Stanza an Alexandrin.

As the *Theseida* and the *Filostrato* of Boccace are both written in the Octave Stanza, of which he is often, though improperly, called the inventor, [see Pasquier, *Recherches*, l. vii. c. 3.] it seems extraordinary that Chaucer should never have adopted that Stanza. Even when he uses a Stanza of eight verses (as in the Monkes Tale), it is constituted very differently from the Italian Octave. I observe, by the way, that Chaucer's Stanza of eight verses, with the addition of an Alexandrin, is the Stanza in which Spenser has composed his *Faery Queen*.

its being composed of a certain number of syllables, and its having the accents of those syllables properly placed. In order therefore to form any judgment of the Versification of Chaucer, it is necessary that we should know the syllabical value, if I may use the expression, of his words, and the accentual value of his syllables, as they were commonly pronounced (64) in his time; for without that knowledge, it is not more probable that we should determine justly upon the exactness of his metres, than that we should be able to cast up rightly an account stated in coins of a former age, of whose current rates and denominations we are totally ignorant.

§ XI. Let us consider a moment, how a sensible critic in the Augustan age would have proceeded,

(64) Mons. l'Eveque de la Ravaliere, in his Discourse *de l'ancienneté des Chansons Françoises*, prefixed to the *Poësies du Roi de Navarre*, has the same observation with respect to the old French poets. *Leur Poësie* (says he, p. 227.) *marque combien ils respectoient cette régle* [of exact riming]; *mais pour en juger aujourd'hui*, ainsi que de la mesure de leurs Vers, *il faut prononcer les mots comme eux*:—He is vindicating the antient French bards from an unjust and ignorant censure of Boileau, in his *Art. Poet.* Chant. i. So that, it should seem, a great Poet is not of course a judicious Antiquary. See above, n. 4. a censure of Chaucer's verse by our Dryden, who was certainly a *great Poet*.

if called upon to examine a work of Ennius (65). When he found that a great proportion of the verses were strictly conformable to the ordinary rules of Metre, he would, probably, not scruple to conclude that such a conformity must have been produced by art and design, and not by mere chance. On the other hand, when he found, that in some verses the number of feet, to appearance, was either deficient or redundant; that in others the feet were seemingly composed of too few or too many syllables, of short syllables in the place of long, or of long in the place of short; he would not, I think, immediately condemn the old Bard, as having all at once forgotten the fundamental principles of his art, or as having wilfully or negligently deviated from them. He would first, I presume,

(65) Though Ennius died not an hundred and fifty years before what may be called the age of Augustus, his language and versification are so different from those of Ovid, for instance, that I much question whether his poems were better relished, or even understood, by the vulgar Romans in that age, than the works of Chaucer are now by the generality of readers. However a great many of his verses are as smoothly turned as those of Ovid himself, and it is well known, that Virgil has not scrupled to incorporate several of them into his divine Æneid. At the same time, whoever casts an eye over the Fragments of his Annals, as collected by Columna, Hesselius, and others, will find frequent examples of all the seeming irregularities alluded to in the text.

enquire, whether all these irregularities were in the genuine text of his author, or only the mistakes of Copyists: he would enquire further, by comparing the genuine text with other contemporary writings and monuments, whether many things, which appeared irregular, were not in truth sufficiently regular, either justified by the constant practice, or excused by the allowed licence of the age: where authority failed, he would have recourse, but soberly, to etymology and analogy; and if after all a few passages remained, not reducible to the strict laws of Metre by any of the methods above-mentioned, if he were really (as I have supposed him) a sensible critic, he would be apt rather to expect patiently the solution of his difficulties from more correct manuscripts, or a more complete theory of his author's versification, than to cut the knot, by deciding peremptorily, that the work was composed without any regard to metrical rules.

§ XII. I beg leave to pursue the same course with respect to Chaucer. The great number of verses, sounding complete even to our ears, which is to be found in all the least corrected copies of his works, authorises us to conclude, that he was not ignorant of the laws of metre. Upon this con-

clusion it is impossible not to ground a strong presumption, that he intended to observe the same laws in the many other verses which seem to us irregular; and if this was really his intention, what reason can be assigned sufficient to account for his having failed so grossly and repeatedly, as is generally supposed, in an operation, which every Balladmonger in our days, man, woman, or child, is known to perform with the most unerring exactness, and without any extraordinary fatigue?

§ XIII. The offences against metre in an English verse, as has partly been observed before, must arise either from a superfluity or deficiency of syllables, or from the accents being improperly placed.

§ XIV. With respect to the first species of irregularity, I have not taken notice of any superfluities in Chaucer's verses, but what may be reduced to just measure by the usual practices (66) of

(66) It is unnecessary to trouble the Reader with an enumeration of Syncope, Apostrophus, Synecphonesis, &c.

Quicquid habent telorum armamentaria vatum.

They may all, I think, be comprehended in our language under this one general principle, that an English verse, though chiefly composed of feet of two syllables, is capable of receiving feet of three syllables in every part of it, provided only one of the three syllables be accented.

In short, whoever can taste the metrical harmony of the following lines of Milton, will not be embarrassed how to dispose of the

even modern Poets. And this, by the way, is a strong proof of his real attention to metrical rules; for otherwise, if he had written without any restraint of that kind, a certain proportion of his deviations from measure must, in all probability, have been on the side of excess.

§ XV. But a great number of Chaucer's verses labour under an apparent deficiency of a syllable, or two. In some of these perhaps the defect may still be supplied from Mss. but for the greatest part I am persuaded no such assistance is to be expected (67); and therefore, supposing the text

(seemingly) superfluous syllables, which he may meet with in Chaucer.

P. L. ii. 123. Ominous | conjecture on the whole success.
302. A pil | lar of state | ; deep on his front engraven—
658. Celestial spir | its in bon | dage, nor the abyss—
v. 495. No inconvenient di | et, nor too light fare.
vii. 122. Things not revealed, which the invis | ible King—

(67) I would not be thought to undervalue the Mss. which I have not seen, or to discourage those who may have inclination and opportunity to consult them. I only mean to say, that, where the text is supported (as it generally is in this Edition) by the concurrence of two or three good Mss. and the sense is clear and complete, we may safely consider it as tolerably correct. In the course of the Notes, I shall have occasion to point out several passages, in which either the disagreement of the good Mss. or the obscurity of their readings, makes a further enquiry absolutely necessary in order to settle the text.

in these cases to be correct, it is worth considering whether the verse also may not be made correct, by adopting in certain words a pronunciation, different indeed from modern practice, but which, we have reason to believe, was used by the author himself.

For instance, in the Genitive case Singular and the Plural Number of Nouns (which, as has been remarked above, in the time of Chaucer had the same expression), there can be no doubt that such words as, *shoures*, ver. 1. *croppes*, ver. 7. *shires*, ver. 15. *lordes*, ver. 47, &c. were regularly pronounced as consisting of two syllables. Whenever they are used as monosyllables, it must be considered as a Poetical Licence, warranted however even then (as we may presume from the natural progress of our language) by the practice of inaccurate speakers in common conversation.

In like manner, we may be sure that *ed*, the regular termination of the Past Tense and its Participle, made, or contributed to make, a second syllable in the words, *perced*, ver. 2. *bathed*, ver. 3. *loved*, ver. 45. *wered*, ver. 75, &c. (68). The first

(68) It appears from the Preface to the last Edition of Chaucer's Works, Lond. 1721, that Mr. Urry, the undertaker of that Edition, had the same opinion with respect to the pronunciation of the final syllables in this and the last mentioned instance; and

step toward reducing words of this form to Monosyllables seems to have been to shorten the last syllable, either by transposing the final letters, as in—*wolde*, ver. 144. *sayde*, ver. 763. &c. or by throwing away the *d*, as in—*coste*, ver. 1910. *caste*, ver. 2083, &c. In both these cases the words still remained of two syllables, the final *e* being sounded

that it was his intention to distinguish those syllables, *whenever they were to be pronounced*, by printing them with an *i*, instead of an *e*; as, *shouris, shiris, percid, lovid*, &c. As such a distinction is entirely unsupported by the Mss. and must necessarily very much disfigure the orthography of the language, I cannot think that an Editor has a right to introduce it upon ever so plausible a pretence. A shorter and (in my opinion) a less exceptionable method would have been to have distinguished the syllables of this sort, *whenever they were to be contracted*, by adding a sign of Syncope, thus; *shoure's shire's, perce'd, love'd.* But after all a reader, who cannot perform such operations for himself, had better not trouble his head about the Versification of Chaucer.

Mr. Urry had also discovered, that the final *e* (of which I shall treat more at large in the next Section) often made a syllable in Chaucer's verse; and (according to the Preface quoted above) he "always marked with an accent, when he judged it necessary to pronounce it; as, swetè, halvè, smalè, ver. 5, 8, 9." I have the same objection to this mark that I have to innovations in orthography; and besides, that it would be apt to mislead the ignorant reader (for whom only it can be intended), by making him suppose that the *e* so marked was really to be accented, whereas the true *e* feminine is always to be pronounced with an obscure evanescent sound, and is incapable of bearing any stress or accent.

as an *e* feminine; but they were prepared to lose their last syllable by the easy licence of changing an *e* feminine into an *e* mute, or of dropping it entirely, according to the modern practice.

§ XVI. But nothing will be found of such extensive use for supplying the deficiencies of Chaucer's metre as the pronunciation of the *e* feminine; and as that pronunciation has been for a long time totally antiquated, it may be proper here to suggest some reasons for believing (independently of any arguments to be drawn from the practice of Chaucer himself) that the final *e* in our antient language was very generally pronounced, as the *e* feminine is at this day by the French.

With respect to words imported directly from France, it is certainly quite natural to suppose, that, for some time, they retained their native pronunciation; whether they were Nouns substantive, as, *hoste*, ver. 753. *face*, ver. 1580, &c.—or Adjectives, as, *large*, ver. 755. *strange*, ver. 13, &c.—or Verbs, as, *grante*, ver. 12756. *preche*, ver. 12327, &c. and it cannot be doubted, that in these and other similar words in the French language, the final *e* was always pronounced, as it still is, so as to make them dissyllables.

We have not indeed so clear a proof of the origi-

nal pronunciation of the Saxon part (69) of our language; but we know, from general observation, that all changes of pronunciation are usually made by small degrees; and therefore, when we find that a great number of those words, which in Chaucer's time ended in *e*, originally ended in *a*, we may reasonably presume, that our ancestors first passed from the broader sound of *a* to the thinner sound of *e* feminine, and not at once from *a* to *e* mute. Besides, if the final *e* in such words was not pro-

(69) This is owing to the Saxons not having left us any metrical compositions, as has been observed before, p. 47. Hickes complains [Gr. A. S. c. xxiii. § 7.], "that it is difficult to know of how many syllables a Saxon verse sometimes consists, for this reason among others, *quod non constat quomodo voces in* e *fœminino vel obscuro terminatæ pronuntiandæ sunt in carmine.*" He might, perhaps with more propriety, have complained, that it is difficult to know how words ending in *e* feminine are to be pronounced in a Saxon verse, because it is uncertain of how many syllables any of their verses consisted. I have mentioned in the text two cases of words abbreviated, in which I think we might conclude from general reasoning that the final *e* was pronounced. As this Theory, with respect to these words, is entirely confirmed by the practice of Orm (the most authentic metrical composer that we have in our antient language) it would not perhaps be unreasonable to infer, that the practice of Orm, in other words of Saxon original, in which the final *e* is pronounced, is consonant to the old Saxon usage. However that may be, the practice of Orm must certainly be admitted to prove, that such a pronunciation prevailed at least 150 years before Chaucer.

nounced, why was it added? From the time that it has confessedly ceased to be pronounced it has been gradually omitted in them, except where it may be supposed of use to lengthen or soften (70) the preceding syllable, as in—*hope, name,* &c. But according to the ancient orthography it terminates many words of Saxon original, where it cannot have been added for any such purpose, as, *herte, childe, olde, wilde,* &c. In these therefore we must suppose that it was pronounced as an *e* feminine, and made part of a second syllable; and so, by a parity of reason, in all others, in which, as in those, it appears to have been substituted for the Saxon *a.*

Upon the same grounds we may presume, that in words terminated, according to the Saxon form, in *en,* such as the Infinitive modes and Plural numbers of Verbs, and a great variety of Adverbs and Prepositions, the *n* only was at first thrown away, and

(70) In most of the words in which the final *e* has been omitted, its use in lengthening or softening the preceding syllable has been supplied by an alteration in the Orthography of that Syllable. Thus, in—*grete, mete, stele, rede, dere,*—in which the first *e* was originally long, as closing a syllable, it has (since they have been pronounced as Monosyllables) been changed either into *ea,* as in—*great, meat, steal, read, dear;* or into *ee,* as in—*greet, meet, steel, reed, deer.* In like manner the *o* in—*bote, fole, dore, gode, mone,* has been changed either into *oa,* as in—*boat, foal;* or into *oo,* as in—*door, good, moon.*

the *e*, which then became final, continued for a long time to be pronounced as well as written.

These considerations seem sufficient to make us believe, that the pronunciation of the *e* feminine is founded on the very nature of both the French and Saxon parts of our language; and, therefore, though we may not be able to trace the reasons of that pronunciation in all cases so plainly as in those which have been just mentioned, we may safely, I think, conclude with the learned Wallis (71), that what is

(71) Gram. Ling. Ang. c. i. §. 2. "Originem vero hujus *e* muti, nequis miretur unde devenerit, hanc esse judico: Nempe, quod antiquitus pronunciatum fuerit, sed obscuro sono, sicut Gallorum *e* fœminium." He afterwards adds: "Certissimum autem hujus rei indicium est ex antiquis Poetis petendum; apud quos reperitur illud *e* promiscuè vel constituere vel non constituere novam Syllabam, prout ratio carminis postulaverit." So that, according to this judicious writer, (who has confessedly searched much deeper into the formation of vocal sounds in general, and the pronunciation of the English language in particular, than any of our other Grammarians,) I might have assumed, as certain, the point, which I have been labouring in the text (by arguments drawn from reason and analogy) to render probable.

There is much more to this purpose in Wallis, *loc. cit.* which I should transcribe, if I did not suppose that his book is in the hands of every one, who is likely to be curious upon this subject. I will only take notice of one passage which may be wrested to his disadvantage. From considering the gradual extinction of the *e* feminine in our language, and observing that the French, with whom he conversed, very often suppressed it in their common speech, he

generally considered as an *e* mute in our language, either at the end or in the middle of words (72),

has been led to predict, that the pronunciation of it would *perhaps shortly* be disused among them as among ourselves. The prediction has certainly failed; but, notwithstanding, I will venture to say, that, at the time when it was made, it was not unworthy of Wallis's sagacity. Unluckily for its success, a number of eminent writers happened, at that very time, to be growing up in France, whose works, having since been received as standards of style, must probably fix for many centuries the antient usage of the *e* feminine in Poetry, and of course give a considerable check to the natural progress of the language. If the age of Edward III had been as favourable to Letters as that of Louis XIV; if Chaucer and his contemporary Poets had acquired the same authority here, that Corneille, Moliere, Racine, and Boileau, have obtained in France; if their works had been published by themselves, and perpetuated in a genuine state by printing; I think it probable, that the *e* feminine would still have preserved its place in our Poetical language at least, and certainly without any prejudice to the smoothness of our versification.

(72) The reasoning in the text concerning the final *e* is equally applicable to the same vowel in the middle of words. Indeed (as Wallis has observed, *loc. cit.*) "vix uspiam in medio dictionis reperitur *e* mutum, quod non ab origine fuerit finale." If therefore it was pronounced while final, it would probably continue to be pronounced notwithstanding the addition of a syllable. If it was pronounced in *swete, trewe, large, riche*, it would be pronounced in *swetely trewely, largely, richely*. [See ver. 123 and 3219, ver. 775 and 3692, ver. 2740 and 3034, ver. 1014 and 1913.] In another very numerous set of words (French Verbals ending in *ment*) the pronunciation of this middle *e* is countenanced, not only by analogy, but also by the still subsisting practice in the French

was antiently pronounced, but obscurely, like the *e* feminine of the French.

§ XVII. The third kind of irregularity, to which an English verse is liable, is from the accents being misplaced. The restoring of Chaucer's words to their just number of syllables, by the methods which have been pointed out above, will often be of signal service in restoring his accents also to their proper places; but further, in many words, we must be cautious of concluding too hastily that Chaucer accented the same syllables that we do. On the contrary, I am persuaded that in his French words he most commonly laid his accent according to the French custom (upon the *last* syllable, or the *last but one* in words ending in *e* feminine), which, as is well known, is the very reverse of our practice. Thus in ver. 3. he uses *licoúr* for *líquour;* ver. 11. *coráges* for *coúrages;* ver. 22. again, *corúge* for *coúrage;* ver. 37. *resón* for *réason;* ver. 77. *viáge* for

language. So Chaucer certainly pronounced the words, *jugement*, ver. 780. 807. 820. *commandement*, ver. 2871. 2981. *amendement*, ver. 4183. *pavement*, *aviement*, ver. 4505, 6. Even Spenser in the same Canto (the 8th of B. v.) uses *attonement* and *avengement*, as words of four syllables; [St. 21. 8.—30. 5.] and Wallis takes notice that the middle *e* in *commandement* was pronounced in his time.

vóyage; ver. 109, 10. *viságe—uságe* for *visage—úsage*; ver. 140. *manére* for *mánner*; ver. 186. *laboúre* for *lábour*; ver. 204. *prelát* for *prélate*; ver. 211. *langáge* for *lánguage*; ver. 212. *mariáge* for *márriage*; ver. 216. *contrée* for *coúntry*; and so through the whole work.

In the same manner he accents the last Syllable of the Participle Present, as, ver. 885, 6. *wedding—coming* for *wédding—cóming*; ver. 903. *living* for *líving*; ver. 907, 8. *coming—crying* for *cóming—crýing*; ver. 998. *brenning* for *brénning*, &c. and as he does this in words of Saxon as well as of French growth, I should suppose that the old Participle of the present tense, ending in *and*, was originally accented upon that syllable, as it certainly continued to be by the Scottish Poets a long time after Chaucer. See Bp. Douglas, Virg. p. 18. ver. 18. Sprygánd; ver. 51. Beránd; p. 27. ver. 49. Fleánd; p. 29. ver. 10. Seánd.

These instances are all taken from the Riming syllables (where a strong accent is indispensably necessary) in order to prove beyond contradiction, that Chaucer frequently accented his words in the French manner. But if he followed this practice at the end of his verses, it is more than probable that

he did the same in the middle, whenever it gave a more harmonious flow to his metre; and therefore in ver. 4. instead of *vértue*, I suppose he pronounced, *vertúe;* in ver. 11. instead of *náture*, *natúre;* in ver. 25. instead of *avénture*, *aventúre;* in ver. 46. instead of *hónour*, *honoúr*, &c.

It may be proper however to observe, that we are not to expect from Chaucer that regularity in the disposition of his accents, which the practice of our greatest Poets in the last and the present century has taught us to consider as essential to harmonious (73) versification. None of his masters, either French or Italian, had set him a pattern of exactness (74) in this respect; and it is rather surprising,

(73) It is agreed, I believe, that, in our Heroic Metre, those Verses, considered singly, are the most harmonious, in which the Accents fall upon the even Syllables; but it has never, that I know, been defined, how far a verse may vary from this its most perfect form, and yet remain a verse. On the *tenth* (or riming) syllable a strong Accent is in all cases indispensably required; and in order to make the line tolerably harmonious, it seems necessary that at least *two more* of the *even* syllables should be accented, the *fourth* being (almost always) one of them. Milton however has not subjected his verse even to these rules; and particularly, either by negligence or design, he has frequently put an unaccented syllable in the *fourth* place. See P. L. b. iii. 36. 586. b. v. 413. 750. 874.

(74) It has been suggested above, that Chaucer probably

that, without rule or example to guide him, he has so seldom failed to place his accents in such a manner, as to produce the cadence best suited to the nature of his verse.

§ XVIII. I shall conclude this long and (I fear) tedious Essay, with a Grammatical and Metrical Analysis of the first eighteen lines of the Canterbury Tales. This will afford me an opportunity of illustrating at once a considerable part of that Theory, which I have ventured to propose in the preceding pages, with regard to the Language and Versification of Chaucer. The remainder I shall take occasion to explain in a few notes upon particular passages.

copied his Heroic Metre from Boccace. But neither Boccace nor any of the older Italian Poets are exact in the disposition of their accents. Though their Hendecasyllable Metre is allowed by the best Critics to be derived from the Trimeter Iambic Catalectic, the perfection of it has never been determined, like that of our Heroic Metre, to consist in the conformity of its Accents to the pure Iambic measure. Quadrio, L. ii. Dist. iii. c. iv. Part. i. Nor does the King of Navarre always dispose his Accents more agreeably to our present notions. It is probable, I think, that some fundamental differences in the three languages may have led each of the three nations to prefer a different form of constructing the same kind of verse.

THE BEGINNING OF THE CANTERBURY TALES.

I. *Whánne*[1] that Ápril with his *shoúres*[2] *sóte*[3]
II. The droúghte of Márch hath *pérced*[1] tó the *róte*,[2]
III. And *báthed*[1] évery véine in *swíche*[2] *licoúr*[3],
IV. Of whíche *vertúe*[1] engéndred ís the floúr;
V. Whan Zéphirús eke wíth his *sóte*[1] bréthe
VI. *Enspíred*[1] háth in évery hólt and héthe

I. 1. *Whanne*, Sax. Hpænne, is so seldom used as a *Dissyllable* by Chaucer, that for some time I had great doubts about the true reading of this line. I now believe that it is right, as here printed, and that the same word is to be pronounced as a *Dissyllable* in ver. 703.

But with these relikes *whanne* that he fond—

Thanne, a word of the same form, occurs more frequently as a *Dissyllable*. See ver. 12260. 12506. 12721. 13924. 15282.

2. *Shoures*, Dis. *Plural number*. See above, p. cxl.—3. *Sote*. See ver. 5.

II. 1. *Perced*, Dis. *Participle of the Past Time*. See above, p. cxl.—2. *Rote*; root.

III. 1. *Bathed*, Dis. See II. 1.—2. *Swiche*, such; from *Swilke*, Sax.—3. *licoúr*, Fr. has the accent upon the *last* syllable, after the French mode.

IV. 1. *Vertúe*, Fr. may be accented in the same manner. There is another way of preserving the harmony of this verse, by making *whiche* (from *whilke*, Sax.) a *Dissyllable*. See ver. 1014. 3921. 5488. 6537. *Vertue* may then be pronounced, as it is now, with the accent on the *first*; the second syllable being incorporated with the first of *engendred*.

V. 1. *Sote*, *swote*, *swete*; sweet, Dis. See ver. 3219. 3699. 3794. 3765. 3790.

VI. 1. *Enspired*, Tris. *Part. of Past Time*.

VII. The téndre *cróppes*[1], and the *yónge*[2] sónne,
VIII. Háth in the Rám his *hálfe*[1] coúrs *yrónne*,[2]
IX. And *smále*[1] *foúles*[2] *máken*[3] mélodíe,
X. That *slépen*[1] *álle*[2] níght with ópen éye,
XI. So príketh *hém*[1] *natúre*[2] in *hir*[3] *coráges*[4];

VII. 1. *Croppes*, Dis. *Pl. N.* as *shoures*. I. 2.—2. *Yonge*, Dis. See ver. 213. 666. 1013. 3233, 73. It is used as a *Dissyllable* in the *Ormulum*. Col. 230.

That wás god bísne fúl i wís till úre yúnge génge.

Stronge and *Longe* are pronounced in the same manner. See ver. 2375. 2640, 6. 3069. 3438. 3682.

VIII. 1. *Halfe*, or *Halve*, Dis. The original word is *Halfen*. So *Selve*, from *Selfen*, is a *Dissyllable*, ver. 2862. 4535.

2. *Yronne*; Run. *Part. of the Past Time*, with the Saxon prepositive particle ȝe, which in the Mss. of Chaucer is universally expressed by *y*, or *i*. In this Edition, for the sake of perspicuity, *y* only is used.

IX. 1. *Smale*, Dis. See ver. 146. 2078. 6897. 10207.—2. *Foules*, Dis. as *Shoures*. I. 2.—3. *Maken*; make. *Plural Number of the Present Tense*. See above, p. xci.

X. 1. *Slepen*, as *Maken*. IX. 3.—2. *Alle*, Dis. See ver. 76. 348. 536. 1854. 2102.

XI. 1. *Hem*; Them. It is constantly used so by Chaucer. 2. *Nature* should perhaps be accented on the *last* syllable (or rather the *last but one*, supposing it a *trisyllable*), after the French manner, though in the present case the verse will be sufficiently harmonious if it be accented on the *first*. That Chaucer did often accent it after the French manner appears from ver. 8778. 9842. 11657. 11945. 12229. In the same manner he accents *Figúre*, ver. 2037. 2045. *Mesúre*, ver. 8132. 8498. *Asúre*, *Statúre*, ver. 8130, 3. *Peintúre*, ver. 11967. *Aventúre*, ver. 1188. 1237. *Creatúre*, ver. 2397. 4884. and many other words of the same form, derived from the French language.—3. *Hir*; Their. The

XII. Than *lóngen*[1] fólk to *gón*[2] on pílgrimáges,
XIII. And *pálmer'es*[1] fór to *séken*[2] *stránge*[3] stróndes,
XIV. To *sérve*[1] *hálwes*[2] *coúthe*[3] in sóndry lóndes;

Possessive Pronoun of the third Person Plural is variously written, *Hir*, *Hire*, *Her*, and *Here*; not only in different Mss. but even in the same page of good Mss. There seems to be no reason for perpetuating varieties of this kind, which can only have taken their rise from the unsettled state of our Orthography before the invention of Printing, and which now contribute more than any real alteration of the language to obscure the sense of our old Authors. In this edition therefore, *Hir* is constantly put to signify *Their*; and *Hire* to signify *Her*, whether it be the Oblique case of the Personal Pronoun *She*, or the Possessive of the same Pronoun.—4. *Corágės*, Fr. is to be accented on the *Penultima*. See before, p. cxlvii. and also ver. 1947. 2215. To the other instances quoted in p. cxlvii. add, *Avantáge*, ver. 2449. 4566. *Brocáge*, 3375. *Foráge*, ver. 3166. *Lináge*, ver. 4270. 5419. *Serváge*, ver. 1948. 4788. *Costáge*, ver. 5831. *Paráge*, ver. 5832.

XII. 1. *Longen*, as *Maken*. IX. 3.—2. *Gon*, Infinitive Mode of *Go*, terminated in *n* according to the Saxon form. See above, p. xci.

XIII. 1. *Pálmer'es*, Dis. the *e* of the termination being cut out by Syncope, as it generally is in *Plural Nouns* of *three* Syllables, accented upon the *first*, and in the *Past Tenses* and their *Participles* of *Verbs*, of the same description, ending in *ed*. The reason seems to be, that, where the Accent is placed so early, we cannot pronounce the final syllables fully, without laying more stress upon them, than they can properly bear.—2. *Seken*, as *Gon*. XII. 2.—3. *Strange*, Dis. Fr. See before, p. cxlii.

XIV. 1. *Serve*, Dis. from *Serven*, the *n* being thrown away before *h*. See above, p. xci. and cxliv.—2. *Halwes*, Sax. ꝑalȝeꝛ. The Saxon ȝ is changed into *w*, as in *sorwe*, *morwe*, and some

XV. And spécially[1] from every *shíres*[1] énde
XVI. Of *Englelónd*[1] to Cánterbúry *they wénde*,[2]
XVII. The hóly blísful mártyr fór to séke,
XVIII. That *hém*[1] hath *hólpen*,[2] whán that thèy were *séke*[3].

others; though it generally passes into y. The derivatives from this same word afford us instances of both forms; *Holyness, Holyday* All-*Hallows*-day.—3. *Couthe*; known, *The Participle of the Past Time* from *Connen*, to know. See before, n. 36.

XV. 1. *Shires*, Dis. *Genitive Case Sing.* See before p. cxl.

XVI. 1. *Englelond*, Trisyllable, from the Saxon Englalanꝺe.—2. The last foot consists of three Syllables.

—to Cán | terbúr | y they wénde.

See above, n. 66.

XVIII. 1. *Hem*; Them. See XI. 1.—2. *Holpen*, the *Participle of the Past Time* from the Irregular Verb *Help*. See before, n. 34.—3. *Seke*; Sick. As Chaucer usually writes this word *Sike*, we may suppose that in this instance he has altered the Orthography in order to make the Rime more exact; a liberty, with which he sometimes indulges himself, though much more sparingly than his contemporary Poets. The Saxon writers afford authorities to justify either method of spelling, as they use both Seoca and Sioca.

I have hitherto considered these verses as consisting of *ten* syllables only; but it is impossible not to observe, that, according to the rules of pronunciation established above, all of them, except the 3d and 4th, consist really of *eleven* syllables. This is evident at first sight in ver. 11, 12, 13, 14, and might be shewn as clearly, by authority or analogy, in the others; but as the *eleventh* syllable, in our versification, being unaccented, may always, I apprehend, be absent or present without prejudice to the metre, there does not seem to be any necessity for pointing it out in every particular instance.

AN INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE TO THE CANTERBURY TALES.

THE CONTENTS.

§ 1. THE Dramatic form of Novel-writing invented by *Boccace*. The *Decameron* a species of Comedy. § II. The Canterbury Tales composed in imitation of the *Decameron*. Design of this Discourse to give, 1. the general Plan of them, and, 2. a Review of the parts contained in this Edition. § III. THE GENERAL PLAN of the Canterbury Tales, as originally designed by Chaucer. § IV. Parts of this Plan not executed. § V. Review of the parts contained in this Edition.—The PROLOGUE. The *Time* of the Pilgrimage. § VI. The *Number* of the Company. § VII. Their *Agreement* to tell Tales for their diversion upon their journey. § VIII. Their Characters. Their setting out. The Knight appointed by lot to tell the first Tale. § IX. THE KNIGHTES TALE copied from the *Theseida* of *Boccace*. A summary account of the *Theseida*. § X. The *Monk* called upon to tell a Tale; interrupted by the *Miller*. § XI. THE MILLER'S TALE. § XII. THE REVES TALE. The principal incidents taken from an old *French Fabliau*. § XIII. THE COKES TALE, imperfect in all the MSS. No foundation for ascribing the Story of *Gamelyn* to Chaucer. § XIV. THE PROLOGUE to the MAN OF LAWES Tale. The Progress of the Pilgrims upon their journey. A reflection seemingly leveled at *Gower*. § XV. THE MAN OF LAWES TALE taken from *Gower*, who was not the inventor of it. A similar story in a Lay of *Bretagne*. § XVI. Reasons for placing the *Wife of Bathes Prologue* next to the *Man of Lawes Tale*. § XVII. THE WIFE OF BATHES PROLOGUE. § XVIII. THE WIFE OF BATHES TALE taken from the story of Florent in Gower, or from some older narrative. The fable much improved by Chaucer. § XIX. THE TALES OF THE

FREERE AND THE SOMPNOUR. § XX. THE CLERKES TALE said by Chaucer to be borrowed from *Petrarch*, whose work upon this subject is a mere translation from *Boccace*. § XXI. Reasons for changing the order of the *three last* Stanzas of the Ballade at the end of the *Clerkes Tale*, and for placing the *Prologue to the Marchants Tale* immediately after them. § XXII. THE MARCHANTS TALE. The adventure of the *Pear-tree* in the Latin fables of *Adolphus*. The *Pluto* and *Proserpine* of Chaucer revived by Shakespeare under the names of *Oberon* and *Titania*. § XXIII. A new PROLOGUE TO THE SQUIERS TALE (now first printed) connecting it with the *Marchants Tale*. § XXIV. THE SQUIERS TALE, probably never finished by Chaucer. § XXV. THE FRANKELEINS PROLOGUE, attributed to the *Marchant* in the common editions. Reasons for restoring it to the *Frankelein*. § XXVI. THE FRANKELEINS TALE taken from a Lay of *Bretagne*. The same story twice told by *Boccace*. § XXVII. Reasons for removing the Tales of the *Nonne* and *Chanons Yeman* to the end of the *Nonnes Preestes Tale*. § XXVIII. Doubts concerning the Prologue to the *Doctours Tale*. § XXIX. THE DOCTOURS TALE. The story of Virginia from *Livy*. § XXX. THE PARDONERS PROLOGUE. The proper use of the Prologue in this work. The outline of THE PARDONERS TALE in the *Cento Novelle Antiche*. § XXXI. Reasons for transferring to the *Shipman* a *Prologue* which has usually been prefixed to the Tale of the *Squier*. THE SHIPMANS TALE probably borrowed from some *French Fableour*, older than *Boccace*. § XXXII. THE PRIORESSES PROLOGUE AND TALE. § XXXIII. Chaucer called upon for his Tale. His RIME OF SIRE THOPAS a ridicule upon the old metrical Romances. § XXXIV. His other Tale of MELIBEE in Prose, a translation from the *French*. § XXXV. THE MONKES TALE, upon the plan of *Boccace's* work *De Casibus virorum illustrium*. § XXXVI. THE TALE OF THE NONNES PREEST. The ground-work borrowed from a Fable of *Marie*, a *French* Poetess. § XXXVII. THE

NONNES TALE not connected with any preceding Tale. Translated from the Life of St. *Cecilia* in the *Golden Legende*. Originally composed as a separate work. § XXXVIII. THE TALE OF THE CHANONS YEMAN, a satire against the Alchemists. § XXXIX. THE MANCIPLES PROLOGUE. The Pilgrims advanced to a place called "Bob up and down." THE MANCIPLES TALE, the fable of *Coronis* in *Ovid*. § XL. The Poem, called *"The Plowman's Tale,"* why omitted in this edition. § XLI. THE PERSON'S PROLOGUE. The time of the day. THE PERSON'S TALE, a *Treatise on Penance*. § XLII. Remarks upon what is commonly called the RETRACTATION at the end of the *Person's Tale*. Conclusion.

§ I. The Dramatic form, which Boccace gave to his collection of Tales, or Novels, about the middle of the fourteenth Century (1), must be allowed to

(1) The Action of the Decameron being supposed in 1384, the year of the great pestilence, it is probable that Boccace did not set about his work till after that period. How soon he completed it is uncertain. It should seem from the introduction to the Fourth Day, that a part (containing perhaps the three first Days) was published separately; for in that Introduction he takes pains to answer the censures, which had been passed upon him by several persons, who had read his Novels. One of the censures is, "that it did not become *his age* to write for the amusement of women, &c." In his answer he seems to allow the fact, that he was rather an old fellow, but endeavours to justify himself by the examples of "Guido Cavalcanti et Dante Alighieri *gia vecchi* et Messer Cino da Pistoia *vecchissimo*." It appears from a passage in the *Laberinto d'Amore* [Ed. 1723. t. iii. p. 24.], that Boccace considered himself as an elderly man, when he was a little turned of forty; and therefore the publication of the first part of the Decameron

have been a capital improvement of that species of amusing composition. The Decameron in that respect, not to mention many others, has the same advantage over the *Cento Novelle antiche*, which are supposed to have preceded it in point of time, that a regular comedy will necessarily have over an equal number of single unconnected Scenes. Perhaps indeed there would be no great harm, if the Critics would permit us to consider the Decameron, and other compositions of that kind, in the light of Comedies not intended for the stage: at least we may venture to assume, that the closer any such composition shall copy the most essential forms of Comedy, the more natural and defined the Plan shall be; the more the Characters shall be diversified; the more the Tales shall be suited to the Characters; so much the more conspicuous will be the skill of the Writer, and his work approach the nearer to perfection.

may very well have been, as Salviati has fixed it, [V. Manni, Ist. del Decam. p. 144.] in 1353, when Boccace was just forty years of age. If we consider the nature of the work, and that the Author, in his Conclusion, calls it repeatedly, "*lunga fatica*," and says, that "*molto tempo*" had passed between the commencement and the completion of it, we can hardly, I think, suppose that it was finished in less than ten years; which will bring the publication of the entire collection of Novels, as we now have it, down to 1358.

§ II. The Canterbury Tales are a work of the same nature with the Decameron, and were, in all probability, composed in imitation of it, though upon a different and, in my opinion, an improved plan. It would be easy to shew, that, in the several points above-mentioned, Chaucer has either been more judicious, or more fortunate, than his master Boccace: but, waving for the present (2) that disquisition, I shall proceed to the immediate object of this Discourse, which is, in the first place, to lay

(2) I will only just mention what appear to me to be fundamental defects in the Decameron. In the first place, the *Action* is indefinite; not limited by its own nature, but merely by the will of the Author. It might, if he had been so pleased, have as well comprehended twenty, or a hundred days, as ten; and therefore, though some frivolous reasons are assigned for the return of the Company to Florence, we see too plainly, that the true reason was, that the budget of Novels was exhausted. Not to mention, that every day after the first may properly be considered as containing a new action, or, what is worse, a repetition of the Action of the former day. The second defect is in the *Characters*, which are so nearly resembling to each other, in age, rank, and even natural disposition, that, if they had been strictly supported, their conversation must have been incapable of that variety which is necessary to carry the reader through so long a work. The third defect has arisen from the author's attempt to remedy the second. In order to diversify and enliven his narrations, he has made a circle of virtuous ladies and polite gentlemen hear and relate in their turns a number of stories, which cannot with any degree of probability be supposed to have been suffered in such an assembly.

before the Reader the general plan of the Canterbury Tales, as it appears to have been originally designed by Chaucer; and, secondly, to give a particular review of the several parts of that work, which are come down to us, as they are published in this edition.

§ III. THE GENERAL PLAN of the Canterbury Tales may be learned in a great measure from the Prologue, which Chaucer himself has prefixed to them. He supposes there, that a company of Pilgrims going to Canterbury assemble at an Inn in Southwark, and agree, that, for their common amusement on the road, each of them shall tell at least one Tale in going to Canterbury, and another in coming back from thence; and that he, who shall tell the best Tales, shall be treated by the rest with a supper upon their return to the same Inn. This is shortly the *Fable*. The *Characters* of the Pilgrims are as various as, at that time, could be found in the several departments of *middle* life; that is, in fact, as various as could, with any probability, be brought together, so as to form one company; the highest and the lowest ranks of society being necessarily excluded. It appears further, that the design of Chaucer was not barely to recite the Tales told by the Pilgrims, but also to describe their

journey, *And all the remenant of* their *pilgrimage* [ver. 726.]; including, probably, their adventures at Canterbury as well as upon the road. If we add, that the Tales, besides being nicely adapted to the Characters of their respective Relaters, were intended to be connected together by suitable introductions, and interspersed with diverting episodes; and that the greatest part of them was to have been executed in Verse; we shall have a tolerable idea of the extent and difficulty of the whole undertaking: and admiring, as we must, the vigour of that genius, which in an advanced age (3) could begin so vast a work, we shall rather lament than be surprised that it has been left imperfect.

§ IV. In truth, if we compare those parts of the Canterbury Tales, of which we are in possession, with the sketch which has been just given of the intended whole, it will be found that more than one

(3) Chaucer was born in 1328, and it is most probable, I think, that he did not begin his Canterbury Tales before 1382, at the earliest. My reason is this. The Queen, who is mentioned in the *Legende of Good Women*, ver. 496. was certainly Anne of Bohemia, the first Queen of Richard II. She was not married to Richard, till the beginning of 1382, so that the Legende cannot possibly be supposed of an earlier date than that year. In the Legende [ver. 329—332. ver. 417—430.] Chaucer has enumerated, I believe, all the considerable works which he had then composed. It was to his purpose not to omit any. He not only

half is wanting. The Prologue we have, perhaps nearly complete, and the greatest part of the journey to Canterbury; but not a word of the transactions at Canterbury, or of the journey homeward, or of the Epilogue, which, we may suppose, was to have concluded the work, with an account of the Prize-supper and the separation of the company. Even in that part which we have of the journey to Canterbury, it will be necessary, in the following Review, to take notice of certain defects and inconsistencies, which can only be accounted for upon the supposition, that the work was never finished by the Author.

§ V. Having thus stated the general Plan of the Canterbury Tales, I shall now, according to my promise, enter upon a particular Review of those parts of them, which are published in this edition, beginning with THE PROLOGUE.

does not mention the Canterbury Tales, but he expressly names *the story of Palamon and Arcite* and *the Life of Saint Cecilia*, both which now make part of them, as separate compositions. I am persuaded, therefore, that in 1382 the work of the Canterbury Tales was not begun; and if we look further and consider the troubles in which Chaucer was involved, for the five or six following years, by his connexions with John of Northampton, we can hardly suppose that it was much advanced before 1389, the sixty-first year of the author's age.

It seems to have been the intention of Chaucer, in the first lines of the Prologue, to mark with some exactness the *time* of his supposed pilgrimage; but unluckily the two circumstances of his description, which were most likely to answer that purpose, are each of them irreconcileable to the other. When he tells us, that "the shoures of April had *perced to the rote* the drought of March" [ver. 1, 2.], we must suppose, in order to allow due time for such an operation, that April was far advanced; while on the other hand the place of the Sun, "having just run half his course in the Ram" [ver. 7, 8.], restrains us to some day in the very latter end of March; as the Vernal Equinox, in the age of Chaucer, according to his own treatise on the Astrolabe (4), was computed to happen on the twelfth of March. This difficulty may, and I think, should, be removed by reading in ver. 8, *the Bull*, instead of *the Ram* (5). All the parts of the description will then be con-

(4) In this particular the Editions agree with the Mss. but in general, the printed text of this Treatise is so monstrously incorrect, that it cannot be cited with any safety.

(5) This correction may seem to be authorised, in some measure, by Lidgate, who begins his continuation of the Canterbury Tales in this manner.

"Whan bright Phebus *passed was the Ram*
Midde of Aprill, and into the Bull came."

sistent with themselves, and with another passage [ver. 4425.], where, in the best Mss. *the eighte and twenty day* of April is named as the day of the journey to Canterbury.

We will suppose therefore, that the preceding day, the seven and twentieth of April, was the day on which the company assembled at the Tabard. In what year this happened, Chaucer has not thought fit to inform us (6). Either he did not think it ne-

But the truth is, that Dan John wrote for the most part in a great hurry, and consequently without much accuracy. In the account which he proceeds to give of Chaucer's Tales, he not only confounds the circumstances of description of the Sompnour and Pardoner, but he speaks of the latter as—

Telling a tale to anger with the Frere.
Storie of Thebes, ver. 32—5.

(6) It is clear that, whether the pilgrimage were real or imaginary, Chaucer, as a Poet, had a right to suppose it to have happened at the time which he thought best. He was only to take care, when the time was once fixed, that no circumstances were admitted into his Poem, which might clash, or be inconsistent with the date of it. When no particular date is assigned to a fable of this sort, we must naturally imagine that the date of the fable coincides with that of the composition; and accordingly, if we examine the Canterbury Tales, we shall not find any circumstances which do not perfectly suit with that period, which has been stated in a former note as the probable time of Chaucer's beginning to compose them. The latest historical fact mentioned in them is the Insurrection of Jakke Straw [ver. 15400.], which happened in 1381; [this passage should be compared with the n. on ver. 14709,]

cessary to fix that point at all; or perhaps he postponed it, till the completion of his work should enable him to assign such a date to his Fable, as should be consistent with all the historical circumstances, which he might take occasion to introduce into it.

§ VI. A second point, intended to be defined in

and the earliest, in which any person of the Drama is concerned, is the siege of Algezir [ver. 56, 7], which began in August 1342, and ended, with the taking of the city, in March 1344. Mariana, l. xvi. c. x. xi. The Knight therefore may very well be supposed to have been at that siege, and also upon a Pilgrimage to Canterbury in 1383, or thereabouts.

They who are disposed to believe the pilgrimage to have been real, and to have happened in 1383, may support their opinion by the following inscription, which is still to be read upon the Inn, now called the Talbot, in Southwark. "This is the Inn where Sir Jeffrey Chaucer and the twenty-nine Pilgrims lodged in their journey to Canterbury, Anno 1383." Though the present inscription is evidently of a very recent date, we might suppose it to have been propagated to us by a succession of faithful transcripts from the very time; but unluckily there is too good reason to be assured, that the first inscription of this sort was not earlier than the last century. Mr. Speght, who appears to have been inquisitive concerning this Inn in 1597, has left us this account of it in his Glossary, v. TABARD. "A jaquet, or slevelesse coate, worne in times past by Noblemen in the warres, but now onely by Heraults, and is called theyre coate of Armes in servise. It is the signe of an Inne in Southwarke by London, within the which was the lodging of the Abbot of Hyde by Winchester. This was the Hostelry where *Chaucer* and the other pilgrims mett together, and, with

the Prologue, is the *number of the company;* and this too has its difficulties. They are said in ver. 24. to have been *nine and twenty*, but it is not clear whether Chaucer himself is included in that number. They might therefore, according to that passage, be *thirty;* but if we reckon the several characters, as they are enumerated in the Prologue, we shall find

Henry Baily their hoste, accorded about the manner of their journey to Canterbury. And whereas through time it hath bin much decaied, it is now by Master *J. Preston*, with the Abbot's house thereto adjoyned, newly repaired, and with convenient roomes much encreased, for the receipt of many guests."

If any inscription of this kind had then been there, he would hardly have omitted to mention it; and therefore I am persuaded it has been put up since his time, and most probably when the sign was changed from the Tabard to the Talbot, in order to preserve the antient glory of the House notwithstanding its new title. Whoever furnished the date, must be allowed to have at least invented plausibly.

While I am upon the subject of this famous Hostelry, I will just add, that it was probably parcel of two tenements which appear to have been conveyed by William de Ludegarsale to the Abbot, &c. *de Hydâ juxta Winton*, in 1306, and which are described, in a former conveyance there recited, to extend in length, "a communi fossato de Suthwerke versus Orientem, usque Regiam viam de Suthwerke versus Occidentem." Registrum de Hyde, Ms. Harl. 1761. fol. 166—173. If we should ever be so happy as to recover the account-books of the Abbey of Hyde, we may possibly learn what rent *Harry Bailly* paid for his inn, and many other important particulars.

them *one and thirty;* 1. a Knight; 2. a Squier; 3. a Yeman; 4. a Prioresse; 5. an other Nonne; 6. 7. 8. Three Preestes; 9. a Monk; 10. a Frere; 11. a Marchant; 12. a Clerk of Oxenforde; 13. a Sergeant of the Lawe; 14. a Frankelein; 15. an Haberdasher; 16. a Carpenter; 17. a Webbe; 18. a Deyer; 19. a Tapiser; 20. a Coke; 21. a Shipman; 22. a Doctour of Physike; 23. a Wif of Bathe; 24. a Persone; 25. a Plowman; 26. a Reve; 27. a Miller; 28. a Sompnour; 29. a Pardoner; 30. a Manciple; 31. Chaucer himself. It must be observed however that in this list there is one very suspicious article, which is that of the *three Preestes.* As it appears evidently to have been the design of Chaucer to compose his company of individuals of different ranks, in order to produce a greater variety of distinct characters, we can hardly conceive that he would, in this single instance, introduce *three,* of the same profession, without any discriminating circumstances whatever; and in fact, when the Nonnes Preest is called upon to tell his tale, [ver. 14814.] he is accosted by the Host in a manner, which will not permit us to suppose that two others of the same denomination were present. This must be allowed to be a strong objection to the genuineness of that article of the *three* Preestes; but it is

not the only one. All the other Characters are particularly described, and most of them very much at large, whereas the whole that is said of the *other Nonne* and the *three Preestes* is contained in these two lines [ver. 163, 4.] at the end of the Prioresses character:

> Another Nonne also with hire had she,
> That was hire Chapellein, and Preestes thre.

Where it is also observable, that the single circumstance of description is false; for no Nonne could be a Chaplain. The chief duty of a Chaplain was to say Mass, and to hear Confession, neither of which offices could regularly be performed by a Nonne, or by any woman (7).

It should seem therefore, that we have sufficient ground to reject these two lines, or at least the

(7) It appears that some Abbesses did at one time attempt to hear the Confessions of their Nuns, and to exercise some other smaller parts of the clerical function: but this practice, I apprehend, was soon stopped by Gregory IX. who has forbidden it in the strongest terms. Decretal. l. v. tit. 38. c. x. Nova quædam nostris sunt auribus intimata, quod Abbatissæ moniales proprias benedicunt; *ipsarum quoque confessiones in criminibus audiunt*, et legentes Evangelium præsumunt publice prædicare: Cum igitur id absonum sit et pariter absurdum, Mandamus quatenus ne id de cætero fiat cunctis firmiter inhibere. If these presumptuous Abbesses had ventured to say Mass, his Holyness would doubtless have thundered still louder against them.

second, as an interpolation (8); by which means we shall get rid of *two* of the Preestes, and the detail of the characters will agree with the gross number in ver. 24, Chaucer himself being included among the *nine and twenty*. As Novellists generally delight in even numbers, it is not improbable that the Host was intended to be the thirtieth. Though not under the same obligation with the other Pilgrims, he might nevertheless tell his Tale among them as a Volunteer.

§ VII. This leads me, in the third place, to exa-

(8) My notion, I cannot call it opinion, of the matter is this; that the first of these lines did really begin the character of the Nonne, which Chaucer had originally inserted in this place together with that of the Nonnes Preest, at as great length as the other characters, but that they were both afterwards expunged, either by himself, or, more probably, by those who published his work after his death, for reasons of nearly the same kind with those which occasioned the suppression of the latter part of the Cokes Tale. I suspect our Bard had been rather too gay in his description of these two Religious persons. See a little concerning the Preest, ver. 15453—65.

If it should be thought improbable that an interpolator would insert any thing so absurd and contradictory to the Author's plan as the second line, I beg leave to suggest, that it is still more improbable that such a line should have come from the Author himself; and further, I think I can promise, in the course of the following work, to point out several other undoubted interpolations, which are to the full as absurd as the subject of our present discussion.

mine what the *agreement* was, which the Pilgrims entered into, at the suggestion of the Host, with respect to the number of Tales that each person was to tell. The proposal of the Host stands thus, with very little variation, in all the Mss.

This is the point—says he, ver. 792—5.

> That eche of you, to shorten with youre way,
> In this viage shal tellen tales tway,
> To Canterbury ward, I mene it so,
> And homeward he shal tellen other two—

From this passage we should certainly conclude, that each of them was to tell *two tales* in the journey to Canterbury, and *two more* in the journey homeward: but all the other passages, in which mention is made of this agreement, would rather lead us to believe, that they were to tell only *one* Tale in each journey; and the Prologue to the Parsons Tale strongly confirms this latter supposition. The Host says there, [ver. 17327.]

> —"Now lacketh us no tales mo than on"—

and calling upon the Parson to tell this one tale, which was wanting, he says to him, [ver. 17335.]

> —"ne breke thou not our play,
> For every man, save thou, hath told his tale."

The Parson therefore had not told any tale before, and only one tale was expected from him (and

consequently from each of the others) upon that journey.

It is true, that a very slight alteration of the passage first cited would reconcile that too to this hypothesis. If it were written—

> That eche of you, to shorten with youre way,
> In this viage shal tellen tales tway;
> To Canterbury ward, I mene it, *o*,
> And homeward he shal tell another *to*—

the original proposition of the Host would perfectly agree with what appears to have been the subsequent practice. However, I cannot venture to propose such an alteration of the text, in opposition to so many Mss. some of them of the best note; and therefore the Reader, if he is so pleased, may consider this as one of those inconsistencies, hinted at above, which prove too plainly that the author had not finished his work.

§ VIII. The remainder of the Prologue is employed in describing the *Characters* of the Pilgrims, and their first setting out upon their journey. The little that it may be necessary to say in illustration of some of the Characters I shall reserve for the Notes. The circumstances of their setting out are related succinctly and naturally; and the contrivance of appointing the Knight *by lot* to tell the first tale

is a happy one, as it affords the Author the opportunity of giving his work a splendid opening, and at the same time does not infringe that apparent equality, upon which the freedom of discourse and consequently the ease and good humour of every society so entirely depends. The general satisfaction, which this appointment is said to give to the company, puts us in mind of a similar gratification to the secret wishes of the Grecian army, when the lot of fighting with Hector falls to Ajax; though there is not the least probability that Chaucer had ever read the Iliad, even in a translation.

§ IX. The Knightes Tale, or at least a Poem upon the same subject, was originally composed by Chaucer, as a separate work. As such it is mentioned by him, among some of his other works, in the *Legende of gode women*, [ver. 420, l.] under the title of—"al the love of Palamon and Arcite of Thebes, though the storie is knowen lite—;" and the last words seem to imply that it had not made itself very popular. It is not impossible that at first it was a mere translation of the Theseida of Boccace, and that its present form was given it, when Chaucer determined to assign it the first place among his Canterbury tales. As the Theseida, upon which this tale is entirely founded, is very

rarely to be met with (9), it may be not unpleasing to the Reader to see here a short summary of it, which will shew with what skill Chaucer has proceeded in reducing a poem of about ten thousand lines to a little more than two thousand, without omitting any material circumstance.

(9) The letter, which Boccace sent to the Fiammetta with this poem, is dated *di Napoli a* 15. *d'Aprile* 1341. Lettere di xiii. Uomini Illust. Ven. 1564. I believe that date is a true one, and it is remarkable, as being the very year and month, in which Petrarch received the Laurel at Rome. See Petr. Ep. Famil. XII. 12. The long friendship, which subsisted between these two extraordinary men, must probably have commenced in the preceding winter, when Petrarch came to Naples in order to be examined by King Robert, previously to his going to Rome. Boccace seems to have been present at some of the conversations between him and the King. [Geneal. Deor. l. xiv. c. xxii.]

The first Edition of the Theseida, according to Quadrio [t. vi. p. 462.], was without date, and under the mistaken title of *Amazonide*, which might have been proper enough for the first book. It was soon after however reprinted, with its true title, at Ferrara, in 1475, fol. Dr. Askew was so obliging as to lend me the only copy of this edition, which I have ever heard of, in England. The Reverend Mr. Crofts has a later edition in 4to. printed at Venice, in 1528, but in that the poem has been *riveduto e emendato*, that is, in plain English, modernized. I cannot help suspecting that Salvini, who has inveighed with great bitterness against the corruptions of the printed Theseida, [Manni, Ist. del Decam. p. 52.] had only examined this last edition; for I observe that a Stanza which he has quoted (from some Ms. as I suppose) is not near so correct as it is in the edition of 1475. As this Stanza

The Theseida is distributed into twelve Books or Cantoes.

B. 1. contains the war of Theseus with the Amazons; their submission to him; and his marriage with Hippolyta.

B. II. Theseus, having spent two years in Scythia, is reproached by Perithous in a vision, and imme-

contains Boccace's own account of the intention of his Poem, I shall transcribe it here from that edition. It is the beginning of his conclusion.

Poi che le Muse nude cominciaro
Nel conspeto de gli omeni ad andare,
Gia fur de quelli che [gia] le exercitaro
Con bello stilo in *honesto* parlare,
E altri in *amoroso* lo operaro;
Ma tu, o libro, primo al lor cantare
Di *Marte* fai gli affanni sostenuti,
Nel vulgar latino mai piu non veduti.

This plainly alludes to a passage in Dante, de Vulgari Eloquentia, l. ii. c. ii. where, after having pointed out the three great subjects of Poetry, viz. *Arma, Amorem, et Rectitudinem*, (War, Love, and Morality,) and enumerated the illustrious writers upon each, he adds: *Arma vero nullum Italum adhuc invenio poetasse.* Boccace therefore apparently prides himself upon having supplied the defect remarked by Dante, and upon being the first who taught the Italian Muses to sing of *Arms*.

Besides other variations for the worse, the fifth line in Salvini's copy is written thus;

Ed altri in *dolci modi* l'operaro—

by which means the allusion to Dante is rendered incomplete.

diately returns to Athens with Hippolyta and her sister Emilia. He enters the city in triumph; finds the Grecian Ladies in the temple of Clemenzia; marches to Thebes; kills Creon, &c. and brings home Palemone and Arcita, who are

Damnati—ad eterna presone.

B. III. Emilia, walking in a garden and singing, is heard and seen first by Arcita (10), who calls Palemone. They are both equally enamoured of her, but without any jealousy or rivalship. Emilia is supposed to see them at the window, and to be not displeased with their admiration.—Arcita is released at the request of Perithous; takes his leave of Palemone, with embraces, &c.

B. IV. Arcita, having changed his name to *Pentheo*, goes into the service of Menelaus at Mycenæ,

(10) In describing the commencement of this Amour, which is to be the subject of the remainder of the poem, Chaucer has entirely departed from his author in three principal circumstances, and, I think, in each with very good reason. 1. By supposing Emilia to be seen first by Palamon, he gives him an advantage over his rival which makes the catastrophe more consonant to poetical justice. 2. The picture which Boccace has exhibited of two young princes, violently enamoured of the same object, without jealousy or rivalship, if not absolutely unnatural, is certainly very insipid and unpoetical. 3. As no consequence is to follow from their being seen by Emilia at this time, it is better, I think, to suppose, as Chaucer has done, that they are not seen by her.

and afterwards of Peleus at Ægina. From thence he returns to Athens and becomes a favourite servant of Theseus, being known to Emilia, though to nobody else; till after some time he is overheard making his complaint in a wood, to which he usually resorted for that purpose, by Pamphilo, a servant of Palemone.

B. V. Upon the report of Pamphilo, Palemone *begins* to be jealous of Arcita, and is desirous to get out of prison in order to fight with him. This he accomplishes with the assistance of Pamphilo, by changing clothes with Alimeto, a Physician. He goes armed to the wood in quest of Arcita, whom he finds sleeping. At first they are very civil and friendly to each other (11). Then Palemone calls upon Arcita to renounce his pretensions to Emilia, or to fight with him. After many long expostulations on the part of Arcita, they fight, and are discovered first by Emilia, who sends for Theseus. When he finds who they are, and the cause of their difference, he forgives them, and proposes the me-

(11) En sieme se fer festa di bon core,
E li loro accidenti si narraro. Thes. l. v.
This is surely too much in the style of Romance. Chaucer has made them converse more naturally. He has also judiciously avoided to copy Boccace in representing Arcite as more moderate than his rival.

thod of deciding their claim to Emilia by a combat of an hundred to each side, to which they gladly agree.

B. VI. Palemone and Arcita live splendidly at Athens, and send out messengers to summon their friends, who arrive; and the principal of them are severally described, viz. Lycurgus, Peleus, Phocus, Telamon, &c. Agamemnon, Menelaus, Castor, and Pollux, &c. Nestor, Evander, Perithous, Ulysses, Diomedes, Pygmalion, Minos, &c. with a great display of ancient history and mythology.

B. VII. Theseus declares the laws of the combat, and the two parties of an hundred on each side are formed. The day before the combat, Arcita, after having visited the temples of all the Gods, makes a formal prayer to Mars. The Prayer, *being personified* (12), is said to go and find Mars in his

(12) Era alor forsi Marte in exercitio
Di chiara far la parte ruginosa
Del grande suo e horribile hospitio,
Quando de Arcita LA ORATION pietosa
Pervenne li per fare il dato offitio,
Tutta ne lo aspecto lagrimosa;
La qual divene di spavento muta,
Come di Marte hebbe laca veduta. Thes. l. vii.

As this contrivance, of *personifying* the Prayers and sending them to the several deities, is only in order to introduce a description of the respective temples, it will be allowed, I believe, that

temple in Thrace, which is described; and Mars, upon understanding the message, causes favourable signs to be given to Arcita. In the same manner Palemone closes his religious observances with a prayer to Venus. His Prayer, *being also personified,*

Chaucer has attained the same end by a more natural fiction. It is very probable that Boccace caught the idea of making the Prayers *persons* from Homer, with whose works he was better acquainted than most of his contemporaries in this part of the world; and there can be no doubt, I suppose, that Chaucer's imagination, in the expedient which he has substituted, was assisted by the occasional edifices which he had himself seen erected for the decoration of Turnaments.

The combat, which follows, having no foundation in ancient history or manners, it is no wonder that both poets should have admitted a number of incongruous circumstances into their description of it. The great advantage which Chaucer has over his original in this respect is, that he is much shorter. When we have read in the Theseida a long and learned catalogue of all the heroes of Antiquity brought together upon this occasion, we are only the more surprised to see Theseus, in such an assembly, conferring the honour of Knighthood upon the two Theban chieftains.

E senza stare con non piccolo honore
Cinse le spade a li dui scudieri,
E ad Arcita Poluce e Castore
Calciaro d'oro li sproni e volontieri,
E Diomede e Ulixe di cuore
Calzati a Palemone, e cavalieri
Ambedui furono alora novelli
Li inamorati Theban damigieli. Thes. l. vii.

sets out for the temple of Venus on Mount Citherone, which is also described; and the petition is granted. Then the sacrifice of Emilia to Diana is described; her prayer; the appearance of the Goddess; and the signs of the two fires.—In the morning they proceed to the Theatre with their respective troops, and prepare for the action. Arcita puts up a private prayer to Emilia, and harangues his troop publickly; and Palemone does the same.

B. VIII. Contains a description of the battle, in which Palemone is taken prisoner.

B. IX. The horse of Arcita, being frighted by a Fury, sent from hell at the desire of Venus, throws him. However, he is carried to Athens in a triumphal chariot with Emilia by his side; is put to bed dangerously ill; and there by his own desire espouses Emilia.

B. X. The funeral of the persons killed in the combat. Arcita, being given over by his Physicians, makes his will, in discourse with Theseus, and desires that Palemone may inherit all his possessions and also Emilia. He then takes leave of Palemone and Emilia, to whom he repeats the same request. Their lamentations. Arcita orders a sacrifice to Mercury, which Palemone performs for him, and dies.

B. XI. Opens with the passage of Arcita's soul to heaven, imitated from the beginning of the 9th Book of Lucan. The funeral of Arcita. Description of the wood felled takes up six Stanzas. Palemone builds a temple in honour of him, in which his whole history is painted. The description of this painting is an abridgement of the preceding part of the Poem.

B. XII. Theseus proposes to carry into execution Arcita's will by the marriage of Palemone and Emilia. This they both decline for some time in formal speeches, but at last are persuaded and married. The Kings, &c. take their leave, and Palemone remains—" in gioia e in diporto con la sua dona nobile e cortese."

From this sketch of the Theseida it is evident enough that Chaucer was obliged to Boccace(13) for

(13) To whom Boccace was obliged is a more difficult subject of enquiry. That the Story was of his own invention, I think is scarcely credible. He speaks of it himself as *very ancient*. [Lett. alla Fiammetta. *Biblioth. Smith. App.* p. cxli.] Trovata una antichissima Storia, e al più delle genti non manifesta, in latino volgare, acciocchè più dilettasse e massimamente a voi, che già con sommo titolo le mie rime esaltaste, ho ridotta. He then tells her, that she will observe that what is related under the name of *one* of the two lovers and of Emilia, is very similar to what had actually passed between herself and him; and adds—Se forse alcune cose soperchie vi fossono, il voler bene coprire ciò che non era onesto

the Plan and principal incidents of the KNIGHTES TALE; and in the Notes upon that tale I shall point out some passages, out of many more, which are literal translations from the Italian.

§ X. When the *Knight* has finished his Tale, the *Host* with great propriety calls upon the *Monk*, as the next in rank among the men, to tell the next Tale; but, as it seems to have been the intention of Chaucer to avail himself of the variety of his Characters, in order to distribute alternate successions of Serious and Comic, in nearly equal proportions, throughout his work, he has contrived, that the *Hostes* arrangement shall be set aside by the intrusion of the *dronken Miller*, whose tale is

manifestare, da noi due in fuori, e'l volere la storia seguire, ne sono cagione. I am well aware however that declarations of this kind, prefixed to fabulous works, are not much to be depended upon. The wildest of the French Romances are commonly said by the Authors to be translated from some old *Latin* Chronicle at St. Denys. And certainly the Story of Palemone and Arcita, as related by Boccace, could not be *very ancient*. If it was of Greek original, as I rather suspect, it must have been thrown into its present form, after the Norman Princes had introduced the manners of Chivalry into their dominions in Sicily and Italy.

The Poem in modern Greek political verses *De nuptiis Thesei et Emiliæ*, printed at Venice in 1529, is a mere translation of the *Theseida*. The Author has even translated the prefatory epistle addressed by Boccace to the Fiammetta.

such as might be expected from his character and condition, a complete contrast to the *Knightes*.

§ XI. I have not been able to discover from whence the Story of the MILLERS TALE is taken; so that for the present I must give Chaucer credit for it as his own invention, though in general he appears to have built his Tales, both serious and comic, upon stories, which he found ready made. The great difference is, that in his serious pieces he often follows his author with the servility of a mere translator, and in consequence his narration is jejune and constrained; whereas in the comic, he is generally satisfied with borrowing a slight hint of his subject, which he varies, enlarges, and embellishes at pleasure, and gives the whole the air and colour of an original; a sure sign, that his genius rather led him to compositions of the latter kind.

§ XII. The next tale is told by the REVE (who is represented above, ver. 589. as " a cholerick man") in revenge of the *Miller's* tale. It has been generally said to be borrowed from the *Decameron*, D. ix. N. 6. but I rather think that both Boccace and Chaucer, in this instance, have taken whatever they have in common from an old *Fabliau*, or *Conte*, of an anonymous French rimer, *De Gombert et des deux Clers*. The Reader may easily satisfy himself

upon this head, by casting his eye upon the French *Fabliau*, which has lately been printed with several others from Mss. in France. See *Fabliaux et Contes*, Paris, 1756. t. ii. p. 115—124.

§ XIII. The COKES TALE is imperfect in all the Mss. which I have had an opportunity of examining. In Ms. A. it seems to have been entirely omitted; and indeed I cannot help suspecting, that it was intended to be omitted, at least in this place, as in the *Manciples Prologue*, when the *Coke* is called upon to tell a tale, there is no intimation of his having told one before. Perhaps our Author might think, that three tales of *harlotrie*, as he calls it, together would be too much. However, as it is sufficiently certain, that the *Cokes* Prologue and the beginning of his Tale are genuine compositions, they have their usual place in this Edition. There was not the same reason for inserting the story of GAMELYN, which in some Mss. is annexed to the *Cokes Tale*. It is not to be found in any of the Mss. of the first authority; and the manner, style, and versification, all prove it to have been the work of an author much inferior to Chaucer. I did not therefore think myself warranted to publish it a second time among the Canterbury Tales, though as a Relique of our antient Poetry, and the founda-

tion, perhaps, of Shakespeare's *As you like it*, I could have wished to see it more accurately printed, than it is in the only edition which we have of it.

§ XIV. In the PROLOGUE TO THE MAN OF LAWES TALE Chaucer recalls our attention to the Action, if I may so call it, of his Drama, the journey of the Pilgrims. They had set out soon after *the day began to spring*, ver. 824 and f. When the *Reve* was beginning to tell his tale, they were in the neighbourhood of Deptford and Greenwich, and it was *half way prime;* that is, I suppose, *half way* past *prime*, about half hour after seven A. M. [ver. 3904, 5.]. How much further they were advanced upon their road at this time is not said; but the hour of the day is pointed out to us by two circumstances. We are first told [ver. 4422, 3.], that

> —" the Sonne
> The ark of his artificial day had ronne
> The fourthe part and half an hour and more;"—

and secondly [ver. 4432.], that he was " five and forty degrees high;" and this last circumstance is so confirmed by the mention of a corresponding phænomenon that it is impossible to suspect any error in the number. The *equality in length* of shadows to their projecting bodies can only happen, when the Sun is at the height of *five and forty*

degrees. Unfortunately however this description, though seemingly intended to be so accurate, will neither enable us to conclude with the Mss. that it was "*ten of the clock*," nor to fix upon any other hour; as the two circumstances just mentioned are not found to coincide in any part of the twenty-eighth, or of any other, day of April (14) in this climate. All that we can conclude with certainty is, that it was *not past* ten of the clock.

The compliments which Chaucer has introduced upon his own writings are modest enough, and quite unexceptionable; but if the reflection [ver. 4497. and f.] upon those who relate such stories as that

(14) The twenty-eighth day of April, in the time of Chaucer, answering to our 6th or 7th of May, the Sun, in the latitude of London, rose about half hour after four, and the length of the artificial day was a little more than fifteen hours. *A fourth part* of 15 hours (= 3^h. 45^m.) *and half an hour and more*—may be fairly computed to make together 4 hours ½, which being reckoned from 4½ A.M. give the time of the day exactly 9, A.M. But the Sun was not at the altitude of 45°, till above half hour after 9. In like manner, if we take the eighteenth day (according to all the Editions and some Mss.) we shall find that the Sun indeed was 45° high at 10, A.M. exactly, but that *the fourth part* of the day *and half an hour and more* had been completed at 9, A.M.

In this uncertainty, I have left the text as I found it in all the best Mss. Only Ms. HA. does not express the hour, but reads thus;

Yt was atte cloke—.

of *Canace*, or of *Apollonius Tyrius*, was levelled at Gower, as I very much suspect, it will be difficult to reconcile such an attack to our notions of the strict friendship, which is generally supposed to have subsisted between the two bards (15). The attack too at this time must appear the more extraordinary on the part of our bard, as he is just going to put into the mouth of his *Man of Lawe* a tale, of which almost every circumstance is borrowed from Gower. The fact is, that the story of *Canace* is related by Gower in his *Conf. Amant.* B. iii. and the story of *Apollonius* (16) (or *Apollynus*, as he is there

(15) There is another circumstance, which rather inclines me to believe, that their friendship suffered some interruption in the latter part of their lives. In the new edition of the *Confessio Amantis*, which Gower published after the accession of Henry IV. the verses in praise of Chaucer [fol. 190. b. col. 1. ed. 1532.] are omitted. See Ms. *Harl.* 3869. Though perhaps the death of Chaucer at that time had rendered the compliment contained in those verses less proper than it was at first, that alone does not seem to have been a sufficient reason for omitting them, especially as the original date of the work, in the 16 of Richard II. is preserved. Indeed the only other alterations, which I have been able to discover, are toward the beginning and end, where every thing which had been said in praise of Richard in the first edition, is either left out or converted to the use of his successor.

(16) The History of *Apollonius King of Tyre* was supposed by Mark Welser, when he printed it in 1595, to have been translated from the Greek a thousand years before. [Fabr. Bib. Gr. V. 6.

called) in the VIIIth book of the same work; so that, if Chaucer really did not mean to reflect upon his old friend, his choice of these two instances was rather unlucky.

§ XV. THE MAN OF LAWES TALE, as I have just said, is taken, with very little variation, from Gower, *Conf. Amant.* B. ii. If there could be any doubt, upon a cursory perusal of the two tales, which of them was written first, the following passage, I

p. 821.] It certainly bears strong marks of a Greek original, though it is not, that I know, now extant in that language. The Rythmical poem, under the same title, in modern Greek, was re-translated (if I may so speak) from the Latin—*απο Λατινικης εις Ρωμαϊκην γλωσσαν. Du Cange*, Index Author. *ad Gloss. Græc.* When Welser printed it, he probably did not know that it had been published already, perhaps more than once, among the *Gesta Romanorum*. In an edition, which I have, printed at Rouen in 1521, it makes the 154th chapter. Toward the latter end of the XIIth Century, *Godfrey of Viterbo*, in his *Pantheon*, or universal Chronicle, inserted this Romance as part of the history of the third Antiochus, about 200 years before Christ. It begins thus [Ms. *Reg.* 14 C. xi.]:

Filia Seleuci regis stat clara decore
Matreque defunctâ pater arsit in ejus amore.
Res habet effectum, pressa puella dolet.

The rest is in the same metre, with one Pentameter only to two Hexameters.

Gower, by his own acknowledgement, took his Story from the *Pantheon*; as the Author, whoever he was, of *Pericles Prince of Tyre* professes to have followed Gower.

think, is sufficient to decide the question. At ver. 5506, Chaucer says,—

> Som men wold sayn, how that the child Maurice
> Doth this message until this Emperour :—

and we read in Gower, that Maurice is actually sent upon this message to the Emperour. We may therefore fairly conclude that in this passage Chaucer alludes to Gower, who had treated the same subject before him, but, as he insinuates, with less propriety.

I do not however suppose that Gower was the inventor of this tale. It had probably passed through several hands before it came to him. I find among the *Cotton* Mss. Cal. A. ii. fol. 69. an old English Rime, entitled "*Emare*," in which the heroine under that name goes through a series of adventures for the most part (17) exactly similar to those of Constance. But neither was the author of this Rime the inventor of the story, for in fol. 70. a. he refers to his original "*in Romans*," or French, and in the last Stanza he tells us expressly—

(17) The chief differences are, that *Emarè* is originally exposed in a boat for refusing to comply with the incestuous desires of the Emperour her father; that she is driven on the coast of *Galys*, or Wales, and married to the king of that country. The contrivances of the step-mother, and the consequences of them, are the same in both stories.

Thys ys on of *Brytayne layes*
That was used by olde dayes.

Of the *Britaine layes* I shall have occasion to speak more at large, when I come to the *Frankelein's Tale.*

§ XVI. *The Man of Lawes Tale* in the best Mss. is followed by the *Wife of Bathes Prologue and Tale,* and therefore I have placed them so here; not however merely in compliance with authority, but because, according to the common arrangement, in the *Merchant's Tale* (18) there is a direct reference to the *Wife of Bathes Prologue,* before it has been spoken. Such an impropriety I was glad to remove upon the authority of the best Mss. though it had been acquiesced in by all former Editors; especially as the same Mss. pointed out to me an

(18) V. 9559. *Justine* says to his brother *January*—
The Wif of Bathe, if ye han understonde,
Of mariage, which ye now han in honde,
Declared hath ful wel in litel space—
alluding very plainly to this *Prologue* of the *Wife of Bath.* The impropriety of such an allusion in the mouth of *Justine* is gross enough. The truth is, that Chaucer has inadvertently given to *a character in the Merchant's Tale* an argument which *the Merchant himself* might naturally have used upon a similar occasion, *after* he had heard the *Wife of Bath.* If we suppose, with the Editions, *that the Wife of Bath had not at that time spoken her Prologue,* the impropriety will be increased to an incredible degree.

other, I believe the true, place for both the *Merchant's* and the *Squier's* Tales, which have hitherto been printed immediately after the *Man of Lawes*. But of that hereafter.

§ XVII. The want of a few lines to introduce the WIFE OF BATHES PROLOGUE is, perhaps, one of those defects, hinted at above, which Chaucer would have supplied if he had lived to finish his work. The extraordinary length of it, as well as the vein of pleasantry that runs through it, is very suitable to the character of the speaker. The greatest part must have been of Chaucer's own invention, though one may plainly see that he had been reading the popular invectives against marriage and women in general; such as, the ROMAN DE LA ROSE; VALERIUS AD RUFINUM *de non ducendâ uxore;* and particularly HIERONYMUS *contra Jovinianum* (19).

(19) The holy Father, by way of recommending celibacy, has exerted all his learning and eloquence (and he certainly was not deficient in either) to collect together and aggravate whatever he could find to the prejudice of the female sex. Among other things he has inserted his own translation (probably) of a long extract from what he calls—"*liber aureolus Theophrasti de nuptiis.*"

Next to him in order of time was the treatise entitled "*Epistola Valerii ad Rufinum de non ducendâ uxore.*" Ms. *Reg.* 12 D. iii. It has been printed, for the similarity of its sentiments, I suppose, among the works of St. Jerome, though it is evidently of a much

§ XVIII. The Wife of Bathes Tale seems to have been taken from the Story of *Florent* in Gower, *Conf. Amant.* B. i. or perhaps from an older narrative, in the *Gesta Romanorum*, or some such collection, from which the Story of Florent was itself borrowed. However that may have been, it must be allowed that Chaucer has considerably improved the fable by lopping off some improbable, as well as unnecessary, circumstances; and the transferring of the scene from Sicily to the Court of King Arthur must have had a very pleasing effect, before the fabulous majesty of that court was quite obliterated.

The old Ballad entitled "The Marriage of Sir Gawaine," [*Ancient Poetry*, vol. iii. p. 11.] which the learned Editor thinks may have furnished Chaucer with this tale, I should rather conjecture, with deference to so good a judge in these matters, to have been composed by one who had read both Gower and Chaucer.

later date. Tanner (from Wood's Ms. Coll.) attributes it to *Walter Map*. Bib. Brit. v. Map. I should not believe it to be older; as John of Salisbury, who has treated of the same subject in his *Polycrat.* l. viii. c. xi. does not appear to have seen it.

To these two books *Jean de Meun* has been obliged for some of the severest strokes in his *Roman de la Rose;* and Chaucer has transfused the quintessence of all the three works, upon the subject of Matrimony, into his *Wife of Bathes Prologue* and *Merchant's Tale.*

§ XIX. THE TALES of THE FRERE and THE SOMPNOUR are well ingrafted upon that of the *Wife of Bath*. The ill humour which shows itself between those two characters is quite natural, as no two professions at that time were at more constant variance. The Regular Clergy, and particularly the Mendicant Freres, affected a total exemption from all Ecclesiastical jurisdiction, except that of the Pope, which made them exceedingly obnoxious to the Bishops, and of course to all the inferior officers of the national hierarchy.

I have not been able to trace either of these tales to any author older than Chaucer, and possibly they may both have been built upon some traditional pleasantries, which were never before committed to writing *.

§ XX. THE CLERKES TALE is in a different strain from the three preceding. He tells us, in his *Prologue*, that he learned it *from Petrarch at Padua;* and this, by the way, is all the ground that I can find for the notion that Chaucer had seen

* I am obliged to Mr. Steevens for pointing out to me a story, which has a great resemblance, in its principal incidents, to *the Freres tale*. It is quoted by D'Artigny, *Memoires d'Histoire*, &c. T. iii. p. 238. from a collection of Sermons, by an anonymous Dominican, printed about the beginning of the XVIth Century, under the title of "*Sermones discipuli.*"

Petrarch (20) in Italy. It is not easy to say why Chaucer should choose to own an obligation for this tale to Petrarch rather than to Boccace, from whose *Decameron*, D. x. N. 10. it was translated by Petrarch in 1373, the year before his death, as appears by a remarkable letter, which he sent with his translation to Boccace. *Opp. Petrarch.* p. 540—7. Ed. Bas. 1581. It should seem too from the same

(20) I can find no older or better authority for this notion than the following passage in *Speght's* life of Chaucer, prefixed to the Edition in 1597. "Some write, that he with Petrarke was present at the marriage of Lionell Duke of Clarence with Violante daughter of Galeasius, Duke of Millaine: yet Paullus Jovius nameth not Chaucer; but Petrarke, he sayth, was there." It appears from an instrument in Rymer [*Liberat.* 42 E. III. m. 1.], that the Duke of Clarence passed from Dover to Calais, in his way to Milan, in the spring of 1368, with a retinue of 475 men and 1280 horses. That Chaucer might have attended the Duke upon this occasion is not impossible. He had been, probably, for some time in the king's service, and had received the year before a Grant of an annuity of 20 Marks—pro bono servitio, quod dilectus Valettus noster, Galfridus Chaucer nobis impendit et impendet in futurum. *Pat.* 41 E. III. p. 1. m. 13. ap. Rymer. There is a curious account of the feast at this marriage in the *Chronica di Mantoua* of *Aliprandi* [Murator. *Antiq. Med. Ævi*, vol. v. p. 1187, & seq.], but he does not give the names of the

"Grandi Signori e Baroni Inghilese,

who were, as he says,

"Con Messere Lionell' in compagnia."

The most considerable of them were probably those 26 (Knights

letter that the story was not invented by Boccace, for Petrarch says, "that it had always pleased him *when he heard it many years before*," (21)

and others) who, before their setting out for Milan, procured the King's licence to appoint Attorneys general to act for them here. *Franc.* 42 E. III. m. 8. ap. Rymer. The name of Chaucer does not appear among them.

The embassy to *Genoa*, to which Chaucer was appointed in November 1372, might possibly have afforded him another opportunity of seeing Petrarch. But in the first place, it is uncertain whether he ever went upon that Embassy. If he did, the distance from *Genoa* to *Padua*, where Petrarch resided, is considerable; and I cannot help thinking that a reverential visit *from a Minister of the King of England* would have been so flattering to the old man, that either he himself or some of his biographers must have recorded it. On the other hand, supposing Chaucer at *Genoa*, it is to be presumed, that he would not have been deterred by the difficulties of a much longer journey from paying his respects to the first literary character of the age: and it is remarkable, that the time of this embassy, in 1373, is the precise time at which he could have learned the story of Griseldis, *from Petrarch at Padua*. For Petrarch in all probability made his translation *in that very year*, and he died in July of the year following.

The inquisitive and judicious author of *Mémoires pour la vie de Petrarque* gave us hopes [Pref. to t. ii. p. 6.], that he would shew, that Chaucer was in connexion *(en liaison)* with Petrarch. As he has not fulfilled his promise in a later (I fear, the last) volume of his very ingenious work, I suspect that his more accurate researches have not enabled him to verify an opinion, which he probably at first adopted upon the credit of some biographer of Chaucer.

(21) —Cum et mihi semper *ante multos annos audita* placuisset, et tibi usque adeo placuisse perpenderem, ut vulgari eam stylo tuo

whereas he had not seen the *Decameron* till very lately.

§ XXI. In the *Ballade*, with which *the Clerk* concludes his Tale, I have changed the order of the three last Stanzas, so as to make it end—

> And let him *care*, and *wepe*, and wringe, and *waile*—

and immediately after I have placed the MARCHANTS PROLOGUE, beginning—

> *Weping* and *wailing*, *care* and other sorwe
> I have enough—.

This arrangement, which recommends itself at first sight, is also supported by so many Mss. of the best authority, that, without great negligence or dulness,

censueris non indignam, et fine operis, ubi rhetorum disciplina validiora quælibet collocari jubet. *Petrarch. loc. cit.* M. L'Abbé de Sade [*Mem. de Petr.* t. iii. p. 797.] says, that the Story of Griseldis is taken from an ancient Ms. in the library of M. Foucault, entitled, *Le parement des Dames*. If this should have been said upon the authority of *Manni* [Ist. del Decam. p. 603.], as I very much suspect, and if *Manni* himself meant to refer to M. Galland's *Discours sur quelques anciens Poetes* [Mem. de l'Acad. des. I. et B. L. t. ii. p. 686.], we must look still further for the original of Boccace's Novel. M. Galland says nothing, as I observe, of the *antiquity* of the Ms. Le titre (he says) est *Le parement des Dames*, avec des explications en Prose, où l'on trouve l'histoire de Griselidis que feu M. Perrault a mise en vers: but he says also expressly, that it was a work of *Olivier de la Marche*, who was not born till many years after the death of Boccace.

I could not have either overlooked or rejected it, especially as the whole turn of the *Marchant's Prologue*, and the express mention of *Grisilde* in ver. 9100. demonstrate, that he is supposed to speak with the *Clerke's Tale* fresh in his memory.

§ XXII. The scene of the MARCHANTS TALE is laid in Italy, but none of the names, except Damian and Justin, seem to be Italian, but rather made at pleasure; so that I doubt whether the story be really of Italian growth. The adventure of *the Pear-tree* I find in a small collection of Latin fables, written by one Adolphus, in Elegiac verses of his fashion, in the year 1315. As this fable has never been printed but once, and in a book not commonly to be met with, I shall transcribe below (22)

(22) *Adolphi Fabulæ*, ap. Leyser. Hist. Poet. Medii Ævi, p. 2008.

Fabula 1.

Cæcus erat quidam, cui pulcra virago—
— — — — — —
In curtis viridi resident hi cespite quâdam
Luce. Petit mulier robur adire Pyri.
Vir favet, amplectens mox robur ubique lacertis.
Arbor adunca fuit, qua latuit juvenis.
Amplexatur eam dans basia dulcia. Terram
Incepit colere vomere cum proprio.
Audit vir strepitum: nam sæpe carentia sensus
Unius in reliquo, nosco, vigere solet.

he material parts of it, and I dare say the Reader ill not be very anxious to see any more.

Whatever was the real origin of this Tale, the achinery of the Faeries, which Chaucer has used o happily, was probably added by himself; and d, I cannot help thinking, that his *Pluto* and

Heu miser! exclamat; te lædit adulter ibidem.
Conqueror hoc illi qui dedit esse mihi.
Tunc Deus omnipotens, qui condidit omnia verbo,
Qui sua membra probat, vascla velut figulus,
Restituens aciem misero, tonat illico; Fallax
Femina, cur tantâ fraude nocere cupis?
— — — — — — —
Percipit illa virum. Vultu respondet alacri:
Magna dedi medicis; non tibi cura fuit.
Ast, ubi lustra sua satis uda petebat Apollo,
Candida splendescens Cynthia luce merâ,
Tunc sopor irrepsit mea languida corpora: quædam
Astitit: insonuit auribus illa meis.
Ludere cum juvene studeas in roboris alto;
Prisca viro dabitur lux cito, crede mihi.
Quod feci. Dominus ideo tibi munera lucis
Contulit: idcirco munera redde mihi.
Addidit ille fidem mulieri, de prece cujus
Se sanum credit, mittit et omne nefas.
— — — — — —

he same story is inserted among *The Fables of Alphonse*, printed y Caxton in English, with those of *Æsop*, *Avian and Pogge*, with- it date; but I do not find it in the original Latin of Alphonsus, Is. Reg. 10. B. xii. or in any of the French translations of his ork that I have examined.

Proserpina were the true progenitors of *Oberon* and *Titania* (23), or rather, that they themselves have, once at least, deigned to revisit our poetical system under the latter names.

§ XXIII. THE PROLOGUE to *the Squier's Tale* appears now for the first time in print. Why it has been omitted by all former Editors I cannot guess, except, perhaps, because it did not suit with the place, which, for reasons best known to themselves, they were determined to assign to *the Squier's Tale*, that is, after *the Man of Lawe's* and before *the Marchant's*. I have chosen rather to follow the MSS. of the best authority in placing *the Squier's Tale* after *the Marchant's*, and in connecting them together by this Prologue, agreeably, as I am persuaded, to Chaucer's intention. The lines which have usually been printed by way of Prologue to *the Squier's Tale*, as I believe them to have been really composed by Chaucer, though not intended for *the Squier's* Prologue, I have prefixed to *the*

(23) This observation is not meant to extend further than *the King and Queen* of Faery; in whose characters, I think it is plain, that Shakespeare, in imitation of Chaucer, has dignified our Gothic Elves with the manners and language of the classical Gods and Goddesses. In the rest of his Faery system, Shakespeare seems to have followed the popular superstition of his own time.

Shipman's Tale, for reasons, which I shall give when I come to speak of that Tale.

§ XXIV. I should have been very happy if the Mss. which have furnished the SQUIERS Prologue, had supplied the deficient part of his TALE, but I fear the judgment of Milton was too true, that this story was "*left half-told*" by the author. I have never been able to dicover the probable original of this tale, and yet I should be very hardly brought to believe that the whole, or even any considerable part of it, was of Chaucer's invention.

§ XXV. We are now arrived with the common Editions, though by a different course, at the FRANKELEINES TALE; and here again we must be obliged to the Mss. not indeed, as in the last instance, for a *new* Prologue, but for authorising us to prefix to this Tale of *the Frankelein* a Prologue, which in the common Editions is prefixed to the Tale of *the Marchant*, together with the true Prologue of that Tale, as printed above. It is scarce conceivable how these two Prologues could ever be joined together and given to the same character, as they are not only entirely unconnected, but also in one point directly contradictory to each other; for in that, which is properly *the Marchant's*, he says expressly [ver. 9110.], that he had been married "*two monthes* and not more;" whereas in the other, the

Speaker's chief discourse is about *his son*, who is *grown up*. THIS therefore, upon the authority of the best Mss. I have restored to *the Frankelein*; and I must observe, that the sentiments of it are much more suitable to *his* character than to that of *the Marchant*. It is quite natural, that a wealthy land-holder, of a generous disposition, as he is described [ver. 333—62.], who has been Sheriff, Knight of the Shire, &c. should be anxious to see his son, as we say, *a Gentleman*, and that he should talk slightingly of money in comparison with polished manners and virtuous endowments; but neither the character which Chaucer has drawn of *his Marchant*, nor our general notions of the profession *at that time*, prepare us to expect from him so liberal a strain of thinking.

§ XXVI. THE FRANKELEINS TALE, as he tells us himself, is taken from a *British Lay* (24); and

(24) Les premieres Chansons Françoises furent nommées des LAIS; says M. de la Ravaliere, *Poes. du Roi. de Nav.* t. i. p. 215. And so far I believe he is right. But I see no foundation for supposing with him, in the same page, that the LAY was *une sorte d'Elegie*, and that it was derived *du mot Latin* Lessus, *qui signifie des plaintes*; or [in p. 217.] that it was *la chanson—la plus majestueuse et la plus grave*. It seems more probable that *Lai* in French was anciently a generical term, answering to *Song* in English. The passage which M. de la Ravaliere has quoted from *Le Brut*,

the names of persons and places, as well as the scene and circumstances of the story, make this

"Molt sot de *Lais*, molt sot de notes"—

is thus rendered by our *Layamon*. [See before, Essay, &c. n. 46.]

Ne cuthe na mon swa muchel of *song*.

The same word is used by Peirol d'Alvergna, Ms. Crofts, fol. lxxxv. to denote the *songs* of *birds*, certainly not of the *plaintive* kind.

Et li ausell s'en van enamoran
L'uns per l'autre, et fan vantas (or *cantas*) et *lais*.

For my own part I am inclined to believe, that *Liod*, Island. *Lied*, Teuton. *Leoth*, Saxon, and *Lai*, French, are all to be deduced from the same Gothic original.

But beside this general sense, the name of *Lay* was particularly given to *the French translations* of certain Poems, originally composed in Armorican Bretagne, and in the Armorican language. I say *the French translations*, because *Lay*, not being (as I can find) an Armorican word, could hardly have been the name, by which a species of Poetry, not imported from France, was distinguished by the first composers in Bretagne.

The chief, perhaps the only, collection of these *Lais* that is now extant, was translated into French octosyllable verse by a Poetess, who calls herself *Marie;* the same, without doubt, who made the translation of *Esope*, quoted by Pasquier [*Rech.* l. viii. ch. i.] and Fauchet [L. ii. n. 84.], and placed by them in the reign of St. Louis, about the middle of the XIIIth Century. Both her works have been preserved together in Ms. *Harl.* 978. in a fair hand, which I see no reason to judge more recent than the latter end of that Century.

The *Lais*, with which only we are at present concerned, were addressed by her to some king. Fol. 139.

En le honur de vous, *noble reis*,
Ki tant estes pruz e curteis,

account extremely probable. The Lay itself is either lost, or buried, perhaps for ever, in one of

A ki tute joie se encline,
E en ki quoer tuz biens racine,
M'entremis des *lais* assembler,
Par rime faire e reconter.—

A few lines after, she names herself.

Oez, Seignurs, ke dit *Marie*.

The titles of the Poems in this collection, to the number of twelve, are recited in the Harleian Catalogue. They are, in general, the names of the principal persons in the several Stories, and are most of them evidently Armorican; and I think no one can read the Stories themselves without being persuaded, that they were either really translated from the Armorican language, or at least composed by one who was well acquainted with that language and country.

Though these Poems of Marie have of late been so little known as to have entirely escaped the researches of Fauchet and other French Antiquaries, they were formerly in high estimation. *Denis Piramus*, a very tolerable versifier of the *Legend of St. Edmund the King* [Ms. *Cotton.* Dom. A. xi.], allows that *Dame Marie*, as he calls her, had great merit in the composition of her LAYS, *though they are not all true*—

E si en est ele mult loee,
E la ryme par tut amee.

A translation of her *Lays*, as it should seem, into one of the Northern languages was among the books given by Gabriel de la Gardie to the University of Upsal, under the title of *Variæ Britannorum Fabulæ*. See the description of the book by Stephanius, in Cat. Libb. Septent. at the end of Hickes, Gr. A. S. edit. 1689, 4^to^. p. 180. That Chaucer had read them I think extremely probable, not only from a passage in his Dreme [ver. 1820—

those sepulchres of Mss. which, by courtesy, are called Libraries; but there are two imitations of it

1926.], which seems to have been copied from the *Lay of Elidus*, but also from the manner in which he makes the Frankelein speak of the Bretons and their compositions. See the note on ver. 11021.

However, in Chaucer's time, there were other *British Lays* extant beside this collection by Marie. *Emarè* has been mentioned before, § XV. An old English *Ballad of Sir Gowther* [Ms. *Reg.* 17 B. xliii.] is said by the writer to have been taken *out of one of the Layes of Britanye*: in another place he says—*the first Lay of Britanye*. The original of *the Frankelein's Tale* was probably a third. There were also *Lays*, which did not pretend to be *British*, as *Le Lay d'Aristote*, *Li Lais de l'Oiselet* [Fabliaux, tom. i.]. *Le Lai du Corn* by Robert Bikez [Ms. *Bod.* 1687.] is said by him to have been invented by *Garaduc*, who accomplished the adventure. In the Ballad, entitled "THE BOY AND THE MANTLE," [Anc. Poet. v. iii. p. 1.] which I suspect to have been made up out of *this Lay* and *Le Court Mantel*, the successful knight is called *Cradock*. Robert Bikez says further, that the Horn was still to be seen at Cirencester.

Q'fust a *Cirincetre*
A une haute feste,
La pureit il veer
Icest corn tout pur veir.
Ceo dist *Robert Bikez*—

In none of these Lays do we find the qualities attributed to that sort of composition by M. de la Ravaliere. According to these examples we should rather define the Lay to be a species of *serious* narrative poetry, of *a moderate length*, in a simple style and *light metre*. *Serious* is here opposed (not to *pleasant*) but to *ludicrous*, in order to distinguish the Lay from the *Conte* or *Fabliau*; as on the other hand its *moderate length* distinguishes it from the *Geste*,

extant by Boccace, the first in the Vth Book of his *Philocopo*, and the second in the *Decameron*, D. x. N. 5. They agree in every respect with each other, except that the scene and the names are different, and in the latter the narration is less prolix and the style less flowery than in the former, which was a juvenile work (25). The only material point, in which Boccace seems to have departed from his original, is this; instead of "*the removal of the rockes*" the Lady desires "*a garden, full of the flowers and fruits of May, in the month of January;*" and some such alteration was certainly necessary, when the scene came to be removed from

or common *Roman*. All the Lays that I have seen are in *light metre*, not exceeding eight syllables. See before, Essay, &c. n. 60.

(25) I saw once an Edition of the *Philocopo*, printed at Venice, 1503, fol. with a letter at the end of it, in which the Publisher Hieronymo Squarzaficho says (if I do not misremember), "that this work was written by Boccace at twenty-five years of age (about 1338), while he was at Naples in the house of John Barrile." *Johannes Barrillus* is called by Boccace [*Geneal. Deor.* l. xiv. c. 19.] *magni spiritus homo*. He was sent by King Robert to attend Petrarch to his coronation at Rome, and is introduced by the latter in his second Eclogue under the name of *Idæus*; ab Idâ, monte Cretensi, unde et ipse oriundus fuit. *Intentiones Eclogarum Franc. Petrarchæ*, Ms. *Bod.* 558. Not knowing at present where to find that Edition, I am obliged to rely upon my memory only for this story, which I think highly probable, though it is not mentioned, as I recollect, by any of the other Biographers of Boccace. A good life of Boccace is still much wanted.

Bretagne to Spain and Italy, as it is in Boccace's novels (26). I should guess that Chaucer has preserved pretty faithfully the principal incidents of the *British tale*, though he has probably thrown in some smaller circumstances to embellish his narration. The long list of virtuous women in Dorigene's Soliloquy is plainly copied from HIERONYMUS *contra Jovinianum*.

§ XXVII. Thus far I flatter myself I have been not unsuccessful in restoring the true order, and connexion with each other, of the *Clerkes*, the *Marchantes*, the *Squieres*, and the *Frankeleines* Tales,

The adventures of *Floriv* and *Biancofiore*, which make the principal subject of the *Philocopo*, were famous long before Boccace, as he himself informs us, l. i. p. 6. Ed. 1723. Hieronymo Squarzaficho, in the letter mentioned above, says, that the story "anchora si nova insino ad ogi scripta in un librazolo de triste et male composto rime—dove il Boccaccio ni cavo questo digno et elegante libro." *Floris* and *Blancaflor* are mentioned as illustrious lovers by *Matfres Eymengau de Bezers*, a Languedocian Poet, in his *Breviari d'amor* dated in the year 1288. Ms. *Reg.* 19 C. i. fol. 199. It is probable however that the Story was enlarged by Boccace, and particularly I should suppose that the *Love-questions* in l. v. (the fourth of which questions contains the Novel referred to in the text) were added by him.

(26) The *Conte Boiardo*, the precursor and model of Ariosto, in his *Orlando inamorato*, l. i. ca. 12. has inserted a Tale upon the plan of Boccace's two novels, but with considerable alterations, which have carried the Story, I apprehend, still further from its *British* original.

but with regard to the next step, which I have taken, I must own myself more dubious. In all the editions the Tales of *the Nonne* and *the Chanones Yeman* precede *the Doctoures*, but the best Mss. agree in removing those Tales to the end of *the Nonnes Preestes*, and I have not scrupled to adopt this arrangement, which, I think, is indisputably established by the following consideration. When *the Monk* is called upon for his Tale the Pilgrims were near Rochester [ver. 13932.], but when *the Chanon* overtakes them they were advanced to Boughton under Blee [ver. 16024.], twenty miles beyond Rochester, so that the Tale of *the Chanones Yeman*, and that of *the Nonne* to which it is annexed, cannot with any propriety be admitted till after *the Monkes* Tale, and consequently not till after *the Nonnes Preestes*, which is inseparably linked to that of *the Monk*.

§ XXVIII. These two Tales therefore of *the Nonne* and *the Chanones Yeman* being removed out of the way, *the Doctoures* comes clearly next to *the Frankeleines*; but how they are to be connected together, and whether at all, is a matter of doubt. What I have printed by way of *Prologue* to the *Doctoures* Tale I found in one of the best Mss. but only in one: in the others it has no Prologue. The first line applies so naturally and smartly to *the Frankeleines*

conclusion, that I am strongly inclined to believe it from the hand of Chaucer, but I cannot say so much for the five following. I would therefore only wish these lines to be received for the present, according to the Law-phrase, *de bene esse*, till they shall either be more authentically established, or superseded by the discovery of the genuine Prologue.

§ XXIX. In THE DOCTOURES TALE, beside Livy, who is quoted, Chaucer may possibly have followed Gower in some particulars, who has also related the story of Virginia, *Conf. Amant.* B. vii. but he has not been a servile copyist of either of them.

§ XXX. *The Pardoneres Tale* has a *Prologue* which connects it with *the Doctoures*. There is also a pretty long preamble, which may either make part of the Prologue, or of the Tale. The Mss. differ in this point. I have chosen to throw it into the Tale, and to confine the Prologue to what I suppose to be its proper use, the introduction of the new Speaker. When he is once in complete possession of his office of entertaining the company, his Prefaces or Digressions should all, I think, be equally considered as parts of his Tale.

The mere outline of THE PARDONERES TALE is to be found in the *Cento Novelle Antiche*. Nov. lxxxii.

§ XXXI. The Tale of *the Shipman* in the best Mss. has no *Prologue*. What has been printed as such in the common Editions is evidently spurious. To supply this defect I have ventured, upon the authority of one Ms. (and, I confess, not one of the best) to prefix to this tale the *Prologue*, which has usually been prefixed to the Tale of *the Squier*. As this prologue was undoubtedly composed by Chaucer, it must have had a place somewhere in this Edition, and if I cannot prove that it was really intended by him for this place, I think the Reader will allow that it fills the vacancy extremely well. *The Pardoneres tale* may very properly be called "*a thrifty tale*," and he himself "*a learned man*" [ver. 12905—8.]; and all the latter part, though highly improper in the mouth of the "*curteis Squier*," is perfectly suited to the character of *the Shipman*.

This tale is generally supposed to be taken from the *Decameron*. D. viii. N. 1. but I should rather believe that Chaucer was obliged to some old French *Fableour*, from whom Boccace had also borrowed the ground-work of his Novel, as is the case of *the Reves* Tale. Upon either supposition, a great part of the incidents must probably have been of his own invention.

§ XXXII. The transition from the Tale of *the*

Shipman to that of *the Prioresse* is happily managed. I have not been able to discover from what Legende of the Miracles of our Lady THE PRIORESSES TALE is taken. From the scene being laid in Asia, it should seem, that this was one of the oldest of the many stories, which have been propagated, at different times, to excite or justify several merciless persecutions of the Jews, upon the charge of murthering Christian children (27). The story of *Hugh of Lincoln*, which is mentioned in the last Stanza, is placed by Matthew Paris under the year 1255.

§ XXXIII. Next to *the Prioresse* CHAUCER him-

(27) In the first four months of the *Acta Sanctorum* by Bollandus, I find the following names of Children canonized, as having been murthered by Jews: XXV Mart. *Willielmus Norwicensis.* 1144. *Richardus, Parisiis.* 1179. XVII Apr. *Rudolphus, Bernæ.* 1287. *Wernerus, Wesaliæ.* an eod. *Albertus, Poloniæ.* 1598. I suppose the remaining eight months would furnish at least as many more. See a Scottish Ballad [Rel. of Anc. Poet. v. i. p. 32.], upon one of these supposed murthers. The Editor has very ingeniously conjectured that "Mirryland" in ver. 1 is a corruption of "Milan." Perhaps the real occasion of the Ballad may have been what is said to have happened at *Trent*, in 1475, to a boy called *Simon*. The Cardinal Hadrian, about fifty years after, mentioning the rocks of Trent, adds, "quo Judæi *ob Simonis cædem* ne aspirare quidem audent. *Præf. ad librum de Serm. Lat.* The change of the name in the Song, from *Simon* to *Hugh*, is natural enough in *this* country, where similar stories of *Hugh of Norwich* and *Hugh of Lincoln* had been long current.

self is called upon for his Tale. In the *Prologue* he has dropped a few touches descriptive of his own person and manner, by which we learn, that he was used to look much upon the ground; was of a corpulent habit; and reserved in his behaviour. His RIME OF SIRE THOPAS was clearly intended to ridicule the "palpable-gross" fictions of the common Rimers of that age, and still more, perhaps, the meanness of their language and versification. It is full of phrases taken from *Isumbras*, *Li beaus desconus*, and other Romances in the same style, which are still extant. A few of his imitations of them will be pointed out in the Notes.

§ XXXIV. For the more complete reprobation of this species of Riming, even *the Host*, who is not to be suspected of too refined a taste, is made to cry out against it, and to cut short Sire Thopas in the midst of his adventures. CHAUCER has nothing to say for his *Rime*, but that "*it is the best he can*" [ver. 13856.], and readily consents to tell another Tale; but having just laughed so freely at the bad poetry of his time, he might think it, perhaps, too invidious to exhibit a specimen of better in his own person, and therefore his other Tale is in prose, a mere translation from, *Le Livre de Melibee et de dame Prudence*," of which several copies are still

preserved in Ms. (28). It is in truth, as he calls it, [ver. 13868.] "*a moral tale vertuous*," and was probably much esteemed in its time, but, in this age of levity, I doubt some Readers will be apt to regret, that he did not rather give us the remainder of *Sire Thopas*.

§ XXXV. THE PROLOGUE of THE MONKES Tale connects it with *Melibee*. The *Tale* itself is certainly formed upon the plan of *Boccace's* great work *de casibus virorum illustrium*, but Chaucer has taken the several Stories, of which it is composed, from different authors, who will be particularized in the Notes.

§ XXXVI. After a reasonable number of melancholy ditties, or Tragedies, as the Monk calls them, he is interrupted by the Knight, and the Host addresses himself to *the Nonnes Preest*, to tell them "*swiche thing as may* their *hertes glade*."

THE TALE OF THE NONNES PREEST is cited by Dryden, together with that of *the Wife of Bath*, as of Chaucer's own invention. But that great Poet was not very conversant with the authors of which

(28) Two copies of this work are in the Museum, Ms. *Reg.* 19 C. vii. and 19 C. xi. in French prose. Du Fresnoy, Bibliot. des Romans, v. ii. p. 248. mentions two copies of the same work *en vers, dans la Bibliotheque Seguier*.

Chaucer's library seems to have been composed. *The Wife of Bathes Tale*, has been shewn above to be taken from Gower, and the Fable of the Cock and the Fox, which makes the ground of *the Nonnes Preestes Tale*, is clearly borrowed from a collection of Æsopean and other Fables, by *Marie* a French Poetess, whose collection of *Lais* has been mentioned before in n. 24. As her Fable is short and well told, and has never been printed, I shall insert it here at length (29) and the more willingly,

(29) From Ms. Harl. 978, f. 76.

D un cok recunte, ki estot
Sur un femer, e si chantot.
Par de lez li vient un gupilz,
Si l'apela par muz beaus diz.
Sire, fet il, muz te vei bel;
Unc ne vi si gent oisel.
Clere voiz as sur tute rien,
Fors tun pere, qe jo vi bien;
Unc oisel meuz ne chanta;
Mes il le fist meux, kar il cluna.
Si puis jeo fere, dist li cocs.
Les eles bat, les oilz ad clos,
Chanter quida plus clerement.
Li gupil saut, e sil prent;
Vers la forest od lui s'en va.
Par mi un champ, u il passa,
Curent apres tut li pastur;
Li chiens le huent tut entur.

because it furnishes a convincing proof, how able Chaucer was to work up an excellent Tale out of very small materials.

§ XXXVII. The sixteen lines, which are printed at the end of the *Nonnes Preestes Tale*, might perhaps more properly be considered as the beginning of the Prologue to the succeeding Tale, if it were

Veit le gupil, ki le cok tient,
Mar le guaina si par eus vient.
Va, fet li cocs, si lur escrie,
Qe sui tuens, ne me larras mie.
Li gupil volt parler en haut,
E li cocs de sa buche saut.
Sur un haut fust s'est muntez.
Quant li gupilz s'est reguardez,
Mut par se tient enfantillé,
Que li cocs l'ad si enginné.
De mal talent e de droit ire
La buche comence a maudire,
Ke parole quant devereit taire.
Li cocs respunt, si dei jeo faire,
Maudire l'oil, ki volt cluiner,
Quant il deit guarder e guaiter,
Que mal ne vient a lur Seignur.
Ceo funt li fol tut li plusur,
Parolent quant deivent taiser,
Teisent quant il deivent parler.

The resemblance of Chaucer's Tale to this fable is obvious; and it is the more probable that he really copied from Marie, because no such Fable is to be found either in the Greek Æsop, or in any

certain what Tale was intended to succeed. In both Dr. Askew's Mss. the last of these lines is read thus—

Seide unto *the Nunne* as ye shul heer.—

and there are six more lines to introduce her Tale; but, as these six lines are manifestly forged for the purpose, I have chosen rather to adhere to the other Mss. which acknowledge themselves defective in this part, and give us *the Nonnes Tale*, as I have done, without any introduction. It is very probable,

of the Latin compilations (that I have seen) which went about in the dark ages under the name of Æsop. Whether it was invented by Marie, or whether she translated it, with the rest of her fables, from the Anglo-Saxon version of Æsop by King Alfred, as she says herself, I cannot pretend to determine. Though no Anglo-Saxon version of Æsop be now as I can find, extant, there may have been one formerly, which may have passed, like many other translations into that language, under the name of Alfred; and it may be urged in support of the probability of Marie's positive assertion, that she appears, from passages in her *Lais*, to have had some knowledge of English. I must observe that the name of the King, whose English Version she professes to follow, is differently stated in different Mss. In the best Ms. *Harl.* 978. it is plainly *Li reis Alured*. In a later Ms. Vesp. B. xiv. it is *Li reis Henris*. Pasquier [*Recherches*, l. viii. c. i.] calls him *Li roy Auuert*, and Du Chesne (as quoted by Menage, v. ROMAN) *Li rois Mires*; but all the copies agree in making Marie declare, that she translated her work "*de l'Anglois en Roman.*" A Latin Æsop, Ms. *Reg.* 15 A. vii. has the same story of an English version by order of a *Rex Angliæ Affrus*.

I think, that Chaucer himself had not determined, whether he should connect *the Nonnes Tale* with that of *the Nonnes Preest*, or whether he should interpose a Tale or two, or perhaps more, between them.

THE TALE OF THE NONNE is almost literally translated from the life of St. Cecilia in the *Legenda aurea* of *Jacobus Januensis*. It is mentioned by Chaucer, as a separate work, in his *Legende of good women* [ver. 426.] under the title of "the life of Seint Cecile," and it still retains evident marks that it was not originally composed in the form of a Tale to be *spoken* by *the Nonne* (30). However there can be no doubt that Chaucer meant to incorporate it into this collection of Canterbury Tales, as the *Prologue of the Chanones Yeman* expressly refers to it.

§ XXXVIII. The introduction of the *Chanones*

(30) The whole Introduction is in the style of a person *writing*, and not of one *speaking*. If we compare it with the Introduction to the Prioresses Tale, the difference will be very striking. See particularly ver. 15546.

Yet praye I you, that *reden* that I *write*—

and in ver. 15530. the Relater, or rather Writer, of the Tale, in all the Mss. except one of middling authority, is called "unworthy *Sone* of Eve." Such little inaccuracies are strong proofs of an unfinished work. See before, p. clxiii. clxiv.

Yeman to tell a Tale, at a time when so many of the original characters remain to be called upon, appears a little extraordinary. It should seem, that some sudden resentment had determined Chaucer to interrupt the regular course of his work, in order to insert a Satire against the Alchemists. That their pretended science was much cultivated about this time (31), and produced its usual evils,

(31) The first considerable Coinage of Gold in this country was begun by Edward III. in the year 1343, and according to Camden [in his *Remains*, Art. *Money*] "the Alchemists did affirm, as an unwritten verity, that the Rosenobles, which were coined soon after, were made by projection or multiplication Alchemical of Raymond Lully in the Tower of London." In proof of this, "besides the tradition of the Rabbies in that faculty," they alledged "the Inscription; *Jesus autem transiens per medium eorum ibat;*" which they profoundly expounded, *as Jesus passed invisible and in most secret manner by the middest of Pharisees, so that gold was made by invisible and secret art amidst the ignorant.* But others say, "that Text was the only amulet used in that credulous warfaring age to escape dangers in battles." Thus Camden. I rather believe it was an Amulet, or Charm, principally used against Thieves; upon the authority of the following passage of Sir John Mandeville, c. x. p. 137. "And an half myle fro Nazarethe is the Lepe of oure Lord: for the Jewes ladden him upon an highe roche for to make him lepe down and have slayn him: but Jesu passed amonges hem, and lepte upon another roche; and yit ben the steppes of his feet sene in the roche where he allyghte. And therfore seyn sum men whan thei dreden hem of Thefes, on ony weye, or of Enemyes; *Jesus autem transiens per medium illorum*

may fairly be inferred from the Act, which was passed soon after, 5 H. IV. c. iv. to make it Felonie *to multiplie gold or silver, or to use the art of multiplication.*

§ XXXIX. In the PROLOGUE TO THE MANCIPLES TALE, the Pilgrims are supposed to be arrived at a little town called "Bob up and down, under the blee, in Canterbury way." I cannot find a

ibat: that is to seyne; *Jesus forsothe passynge be the myddes of hem he wente:* in tokene and mynde, that oure Lord passed thorghe out the Jewes crueltee, and scaped safly fro hem; *so surely move men passen the perile of Thefes.*" See also Catal. Mss. Harl. n. 2966. It must be owned, that a Spell against Thieves was the most serviceable, if not the most elegant, Inscription that could be put upon Gold Coin.

Ashmole, in his *Theatrum Chemicum*, p. 443. has repeated this ridiculous story concerning Lully with additional circumstances, as if he really believed it; though Lully by the best accounts had been dead above twenty years before Edward III. began to coin Gold.

The same Author (*Mercuriophilus Anglicus*, as he styles himself) has inserted among his *Hermetique Mysteries* (p. 213.) an old English Poem, under the title of *Hermes Bird*, which (he says in his Notes, p. 467.) was thought to have been written originally by *Raymund Lully*, or at least made English by Cremer, Abbot of Westminster and Scholar to Lully, p. 465. The truth is, that the Poem is one of *Lydgate's*, and had been printed by Caxton under its true title, *The Chorle and the Bird;* and the fable, on which it is built, is related by *Petrus Alphonsus* (*de Clericali Disciplinâ.* Ms. *Reg.* 10 B. xii.) who lived above two hundred years before Lully.

town of that name in any Map, but it must have lain between Boughton, the place last mentioned, and Canterbury. The Fable of the Crow, which is the subject of THE MANCIPLES TALE, has been related by so many authors, from Ovid down to Gower, that it is impossible to say whom Chaucer principally followed. His skill in new dressing an old story was never, perhaps, more successfully exerted.

§ XL. After the *Tale of the Manciple* the common Editions, since 1542 (32), place what is called *the*

(32) In the Edition of 1542, when *the Plowman's Tale* was first printed, it was placed *after* the Person's Tale. The Editor, whoever he was, had not assurance enough, it should seem, to thrust it into the body of the work. In the subsequent Editions however, as it had probably been well received by the public, upon account of its violent invectives against the Church of Rome, it was advanced to a more honourable station, next to the Manciple's Tale and *before* the Person's. The only account which we have of any Ms. of this Tale is from Mr. Speght, who says (Note prefixed to *Plowman's Tale*), that he had "seene it in written hand in John Stowes Librarie in a booke of such antiquitie, as seemed to have been written neare to Chaucer's time." He does not say that it was *among the Canterbury Tales*, or that it had *Chaucer's name* to it. We can therefore only judge of it by the internal evidence, and upon that I have no scruple to declare my own opinion, that it has not the least resemblance to Chaucer's manner, either of writing or thinking, in his other works. Though he and Boccace have laughed at some of the abuses of religion and the disorders of Ecclesiastical persons, it is quite incredible

Plowman's Tale; but, as I cannot understand that there is the least ground of evidence, either external or internal, for believing it to be a work of Chaucer's, I have not admitted it into this Edition.

§ XLI. THE PERSONES PROLOGUE therefore is here placed next to *the Manciple's Tale*, agreeably to

that either of them, or even Wicliff himself, would have railed at the whole government of the Church, in the style of this *Plowman's Tale*. If they had been disposed to such an attempt, their times would not have borne it; but it is probable, that Chaucer, though he has been pressed into the service of Protestantism by some zealous writers, was as good a Catholick as men of his understanding and rank in life have generally been. The necessity of auricular Confession, one of the great scandals of Popery, cannot be more strongly inculcated than it is in the following *Tale of the Person*.

I will just observe, that Spenser seems to speak of the Author of *the Plowman's Tale* as a distinct person from Chaucer, though, in compliance, I suppose, with the taste of his age, he puts them both on the same footing. In the epilogue to *the Shepherd's Calendar* he says to his book,—

Dare not to match thy pipe with *Tityrus* his stile,
Nor with the Pilgrim that *the Ploughman* plaid awhile,

I know that Mr. Warton, in his excellent *Observations on Spenser*, v. i. p. 125, supposes this passage to refer to *the Visions of Pierce Ploughman;* but my reason for differing from him is, that the Author of the Visions never, as I remember, speaks of *himself* in the character of *a Ploughman*.

Of *the Pilgrimes Tale*, which has also, with as little foundation, been attributed to Chaucer (Speght's Life of Ch.) I shall speak in another place. See App. to Pref. A. n. e. p. xviii.

all the Mss. which are known, and to every Edition before 1542. In this Prologue, which introduces the last Tale upon the journey to Canterbury, Chaucer has again pointed out to us the time of the day; but the hour by the clock is very differently represented in the Mss. In some it is *ten*, in others *two:* in most of the best Mss. *foure*, and in one *five*. According to the phænomena here mentioned, the Sun being 29° high, and the length of the Shadow to the projecting body as 11 to 6, it was *between four and five*. As by this reckoning there were at least three hours left to sunset, one does not well see with what propriety the Host admonishes the Person to *haste him*, because "*the Sonne wol adoun*," and to be "*fructuous in litel space;* and indeed *the Person*, knowing probably how much time he had good, seems to have paid not the least regard to his admonition; for his Tale, if it may be so called, is twice as long as any of the others. It is entitled in some Mss. "*Tractatus de Pœnitentiâ*, pro Fabulâ, ut dicitur, Rectoris;" and I much suspect that it is a translation of some such treatise. I cannot recommend it as a very entertaining or edifying performance at this day; but the Reader will be pleased to remember, in excuse both of Chaucer and his Editor, that, considering the Can-

terbury Tales as a great picture of life and manners, the piece would not have been complete, if it had not included the Religion of the time.

§ XLII. What is commonly called *the Retractation* at the end of the Person's Tale, in several Mss. makes part of that Tale; and certainly the appellation of "*litel tretise*" suits better with a single tale, than with such a voluminous work as the whole body of Canterbury Tales. But then on the other hand the recital, which is made in one part of it of several compositions of Chaucer, could properly be made by nobody but himself. I have printed it, as I found it in Ms. Ask i. with a few corrections from other Mss. and in the Notes I shall give the best account that I can of it.

Having thus gone through the several parts of the Canterbury Tales, which are printed in this Edition, it may not be improper, in the conclusion of this Discourse, to state shortly the parts which are wanting to complete the journey *to* Canterbury: of the rest of Chaucer's intended Plan, as has been said before, we have nothing. Supposing therefore the number of the Pilgrims to have been *twenty-nine* (see before, § VI.), and allowing the Tale of *the Chanones Yeman* to stand in the place of that which we had a right to expect from *the Knightes Yeman*,

the Tales wanting will be only those of the *five* City-Mechanics and the Ploughman. It is not likely that the Tales told by such characters would have been among the most valuable of the set; but they might, and probably would, have served to link together those which at present are unconnected; and for that reason it is much to be regretted, that they either have been lost, or, as I rather (33) believe, were never finished by the Author.

(33) When we recollect, that Chaucer's papers must in all probability have fallen into the hands of his Son Thomas, who, at the time of his father's death, was of full age, we can hardly doubt that all proper care was taken of them; and if the Tales in question had ever been inserted among the others, it is scarce conceivable that they should all have slipt out of all the Copies of this work, of which we have any knowledge or information. Nor is there any sufficient ground for imagining that so many Tales could have been suppressed by design; though such a supposition may perhaps be admitted to account for the loss of some smaller passages. See above, n. 8.

THE

CANTERBURY TALES.

THE PROLOGUE.

WHANNE that April with his shoures sote
The droughte of March hath perced to the rote,
And bathed every veine in swiche licour,
Of whiche vertue engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eke with his sote brethe
Enspired hath in every holt and hethe
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours yronne,
And smale foules maken melodie,
That slepen alle night with open eye,
So priketh hem nature in hir corages;
Than longen folk to gon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken strange strondes,
To serve halwes couthe in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Englelond, to Canterbury they wende,
The holy blisful martyr for to seke,
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.
Befelle, that, in that seson on a day,

In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay,
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Canterbury with devoute corage,
At night was come into that hostelrie
Wel nine and twenty in a compagnie
Of sondry folk, by aventure yfalle
In felawship, and pilgrimes were they alle,
That toward Canterbury wolden ride.
The chambres and the stables weren wide,
And wel we weren esed atte beste.
And shortly, whan the sonne was gon to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everich on,
That I was of hir felawship anon,
And made forword erly for to rise,
To take oure way ther as I you devise.
But natheles, while I have time and space,
Or that I forther in this tale pace,
Me thinketh it accordant to reson,
To tellen you alle the condition
Of eche of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degre;
And eke in what araie that they were inne:
And at a knight than wol I firste beginne.

A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the time that he firste began

To riden out, he loved chevalrie,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curtesie.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he ridden, no man ferre,
As wel in Cristendom as in Hethenesse,
And ever honoured for his worthinesse.
At Alisandre he was whan it was wonne.
Ful often time he hadde the bord begonne
Aboven alle nations in Pruce.
In Lettowe hadde he reysed and in Ruce,
No cristen man so ofte of his degre.
In Gernade at the siege eke hadde he be
Of Algesir, and ridden in Belmarie.
At Leyes was he, and at Satalie,
Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete see
At many a noble armee hadde he be.
At mortal batailles hadde he ben fiftene,
And foughten for our faith at Tramissene
In listes thries, and ay slain his fo.
This ilke worthy knight hadde ben also
Somtime with the lord of Palatie,
Agen another hethen in Turkie:
And evermore he hadde a sovereine pris.
And though that he was worthy he was wise,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He never yet no vilanie ne sayde

In alle his lif, unto no manere wight.
He was a veray parfit gentil knight.
But for to tellen you of his araie,
His hors was good, but he ne was not gaie.
Of fustian he wered a gipon,
Alle besmotred with his habergeon,
For he was late ycome fro his viage,
And wente for to don his pilgrimage.

With him ther was his sone a yonge SQUIER,
A lover, and a lusty bacheler,
With lockes crull as they were laide in presse.
Of twenty yere of age he was I gesse.
Of his stature he was of even lengthe,
And wonderly deliver, and grete of strengthe.
And he hadde be somtime in chevachie,
In Flaundres, in Artois, and in Picardie,
And borne him wel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his ladies grace.
Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
Alle ful of fresshe floures, white and rede.
Singing he was, or floyting alle the day,
He was as fresshe, as is the moneth of May.
Short was his goune, with sleves long and wide.
Wel coude he sitte on hors, and fayre ride.
He coude songes make, and wel endite,

Juste and eke dance, and wel pourtraie and write.
So hote he loved, that by nightertale
He slep no more than doth the nightingale.
Curteis he was, lowly, and servisable,
And carf before his fader at the table.

A YEMAN hadde he, and servantes no mo
At that time, for him luste to ride so;
And he was cladde in cote and hode of grene.
A shefe of peacock arwes bright and kene
Under his belt he bare ful thriftily.
Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly:
His arwes drouped not with fetheres lowe.
And in his hond he bare a mighty bowe.
A not-hed hadde he, with a broune visage.
Of wood-craft coude he wel alle the usage.
Upon his arme he bare a gaie bracer,
And by his side a swerd and a bokeler,
And on that other side a gaie daggere,
Harneised wel, and sharpe as point of spere:
A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene.
An horne he bare, the baudrik was of grene.
A forster was he sothely as I gesse.

Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,
That of hire smiling was ful simple and coy;

Hire gretest othe n'as but by Seint Eloy;
And she was cleped madame Eglentine.
Ful wel she sange the service devine,
Entuned in hire nose ful swetely;
And Frenche she spake ful fayre and fetisly,
After the scole of Stratford atte bowe,
For Frenche of Paris was to hire unknowe.
At mete was she wel ytaughte withalle;
She lette no morsel from hire lippes falle,
Ne wette hire fingres in hire sauce depe.
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
Thatte no drope ne fell upon hire brest.
In curtesie was sette ful moche hire lest.
Hire over lippe wiped she so clene,
That in hire cuppe was no ferthing sene
Of grese, whan she dronken hadde hire draught.
Ful semely after hire mete she raught.
And sikerly she was of grete disport,
And ful plesant, and amiable of port,
And peined hire to contrefeten chere
Of court, and ben estatelich of manere,
And to ben holden digne of reverence.
But for to speken of hire conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous,
She wolde wepe if that she saw a mous
Caughte in a trappe, if it were ded or bledde.

Of smale houndes hadde she, that she fedde
With rosted flesh, and milk, and wastel brede.
But sore wept she if on of hem were dede,
Or if men smote it with a yerde smert:
And all was conscience and tendre herte.
Ful semely hire wimple ypinched was;
Hire nose tretis; hire eyen grey as glas;
Hire mouth ful smale, and therto soft and red;
But sikerly she hadde a fayre forehed.
It was almost a spanne brode I trowe;
For hardily she was not undergrowe.
Ful fetise was hire cloke, as I was ware.
Of smale corall aboute hire arm she bare
A pair of bedes, gauded all with grene;
And theron heng a broche of gold ful shene,
On whiche was first ywritten a crouned A,
And after, *Amor vincit omnia.*
Another NONNE also with hire hadde she,
That was hire chapelleine, and PREESTES thre.

A MONK ther was, a fayre for the maistrie,
An out-rider, that loved venerie;
A manly man, to ben an abbot able.
Ful many a deinte hors hadde he in stable:
And whan he rode, men mighte his bridel here
Gingeling in a whistling wind as clere,

And eke as loude, as doth the chapell belle,
Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.
The reule of seint Maure and of seint Beneit,
Because that it was olde and somdele streit,
This ilke monk lette olde thinges pace,
And held after the newe world the trace.
He yave not of the text a pulled hen,
That saith, that hunters ben not holy men;
Ne that a monk, whan he is rekkeles,
Is like to a fish that is waterles;
This is to say, a monk out of his cloistre.
This ilke text held he not worth an oistre.
And I say his opinion was good.
What shulde he studie, and maken himselven wood,
Upon a book in cloistre alway to pore,
Or swinken with his hondes, and laboure,
As Austin bit? how shal the world be served?
Let Austin have his swink to him reserved.
Therfore he was a prickasoure a right:
Greihoundes he hadde as swift as foul of flight:
Of pricking and of hunting for the hare
Was all his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I saw his sleves purfiled at the hond
With gris, and that the finest of the lond.
And for to fasten his hood under his chinne,
He hadde of gold ywrought a curious pinne;

A love-knotte in the greter end ther was.
His hed was balled, and shone as any glas,
And eke his face, as it hadde ben anoint.
He was a lord ful fat and in good point.
His eyen stepe, and rolling in his hed,
That stemed as a forneis of a led.
His botes souple, his hors in gret estat,
Now certainly he was a fayre prelat.
He was not pale as a forpined gost.
A fat swan loved he best of any rost.
His palfrey was as broune as is a bery.

A FRERE ther was, a wanton and a mery,
A Limitour, a ful solempne man.
In all the ordres foure is non that can
So moche of daliance and fayre langage.
He hadde ymade ful many a mariage
Of yonge wimmen, at his owen cost.
Until his ordre he was a noble post.
Ful wel beloved, and familier was he
With frankeleins over all in his contree,
And eke with worthy wimmen of the toun:
For he had power of confession,
As saide himselfe, more than a curat,
For of his ordre he was licenciat.
Ful swetely herde he confession,

And plesant was his absolution.
He was an esy man to give penance,
Ther as he wiste to han a good pitance:
For unto a poure ordre for to give
Is signe that a man is wel yshrive.
For if he gave, he dorste make avant,
He wiste that a man was repentant.
For many a man so hard is of his herte,
He may not wepe although him sore smerte.
Therfore in stede of weping and praieres,
Men mote give silver to the poure freres.
His tippet was ay farsed ful of knives,
And pinnes, for to given fayre wives.
And certainly he hadde a mery note.
Wel coude he singe and plaien on a rote.
Of yeddinges he bare utterly the pris.
His nekke was white as the flour de lis.
Therto he strong was as a champioun,
And knew wel the tavernes in every toun,
And every hosteler and gay tapstere,
Better than a lazar or a beggere,
For unto swiche a worthy man as he
Accordeth nought, as by his faculte,
To haven with sike lazars acquaintance.
It is not honest, it may not avance,
As for to delen with no swiche pouraille,

But all with riche, and sellers of vitaille.
And over all, ther as profit shuld arise,
Curteis he was, and lowly of servise.
Ther n'as no man nowher so vertuous.
He was the beste begger in all his hous:
And gave a certaine ferme for the grant,
Non of his bretheren came in his haunt.
For though a widewe hadde but a shoo,
(So plesant was his *In principio*)
Yet wold he have a ferthing or he went.
His pourchas was wel better than his rent.
And rage he coude as it hadde ben a whelp,
In lovedayes, ther coude he mochel help.
For ther was he nat like a cloisterere,
With thredbare cope, as is a poure scolere,
But he was like a maister or a pope.
Of double worsted was his semicope,
That round was as a belle out of the presse.
Somwhat he lisped for his wantonnesse,
To make his English swete upon his tonge;
And in his harping, whan that he hadde songe,
His eyen twinkeled in his hed aright,
As don the sterres in a frosty night.
This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.

A MARCHANT was ther with a forked berd,

In mottelee, and highe on hors he sat,
And on his hed a Flaundrish bever hat.
His botes clapsed fayre and fetisly.
His resons spake he ful solempnely,
Souning alway the encrese of his winning.
He wold the see were kept for any thing
Betwixen Middelburgh and Orewell.
Wel coud he in eschanges sheldes selle.
This worthy man ful wel his wit besette;
Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,
So stedefastly didde he his governance,
With his bargeines, and with his chevisance.
Forsothe he was a worthy man withalle,
But soth to sayn, I n'ot how men him calle.

A Clerk ther was of Oxenforde also,
That unto logike hadde long ygo.
As lene was his hors as is a rake,
And he was not right fat, I undertake;
But loked holwe, and therto soberly.
Ful thredbare was his overest courtepy,
For he hadde geten him yet no benefice,
Ne was nought worldly to have an office.
For him was lever han at his beddes hed
A twenty bokes, clothed in black or red,
Of Aristotle, and his philosophie,

Than robes riche, or fidel, or sautrie.
But all be that he was a philosophre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre,
But all that he might of his frendes hente,
On bokes and on lerning he it spente,
And besily gan for the soules praie
Of hem, that yave him wherwith to scolaie.
Of studie toke he moste cure and hede.
Not a word spake he more than was nede;
And that was said in forme and reverence,
And short and quike, and ful of high sentence.
Souning in moral vertue was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

A Sergeant of the Lawe ware and wise,
That often hadde yben at the paruis,
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
Discrete he was, and of gret reverence:
He semed swiche, his wordes were so wise,
Justice he was ful often in assise,
By patent, and by pleine commissioun;
For his science, and for his high renoun,
Of fees and robes had he many on.
So grete a pourchasour was nowher non.
All was fee simple to him in effect,
His pourchasing might not ben in suspect.

Nowher so besy a man as he ther n'as,
And yet he semed besier than he was.
In termes hadde he cas and domes alle,
That fro the time of king Will. weren falle.
Therto he coude endite, and make a thing,
Ther coude no wight pinche at his writing.
And every statute coude he plaine by rote.
He rode but homely in a medlee cote,
Girt with a seint of silk, with barres smale;
Of his array tell I no lenger tale.

A FRANKELEIN was in this compagnie;
White was his berd, as is the dayesie.
Of his complexion he was sanguin.
Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in win.
To liven in delit was ever his wone,
For he was Epicures owen sone,
That held opinion, that plein delit
Was verailly felicite parfite.
An housholder, and that a grete was he;
Seint Julian he was in his contree.
His brede, his ale, was alway after on;
A better envyned man was no wher non.
Withouten bake mete never was his hous,
Of fish and flesh, and that so plenteous,
It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke,

Of alle deintees that men coud of thinke,
After the sondry sesons of the yere,
So changed he his mete and his soupere.
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe,
And many a breme, and many a luce in stewe.
Wo was his coke, but if his sauce were
Poinant and sharpe, and redy all his gere.
His table dormant in his halle alway
Stode redy covered alle the longe day.

At sessions ther was he lord and sire.
Ful often time he was knight of the shire.
An anelace and a gipciere all of silk,
Heng at his girdel, white as morwe milk.
A shereve hadde he ben, and a countour.
Was no wher swiche a worthy vavasour.

An Haberdasher, and a Carpenter,
A Webbe, a Deyer, and a Tapiser,
Were alle yclothed in o livere,
Of a solempne and grete fraternite.
Ful freshe and newe hir gere ypiked was.
Hir knives were ychaped not with bras,
But all with silver wrought ful clene and wel,
Hir girdeles and hir pouches every del.
Wel semed eche of hem a fayre burgeis,
To sitten in a gild halle, on the deis.

Everich for the wisdom that he can,
Was shapelich for to ben an alderman.
For catel hadden they ynough and rent,
And eke hir wives wolde it wel assent:
And elles certainly they were to blame.
It is ful fayre to ben ycleped madame,
And for to gon to vigiles all before,
And have a mantel reallich ybore.

A Coke they hadden with hem for the nones,
To boile the chickenes and the marie bones,
And poudre marchant, tart and galingale.
Wel coude he knowe a draught of London ale.
He coude roste, and sethe, and broile, and frie,
Maken mortrewes, and wel bake a pie.
But gret harm was it, as it thoughte me,
That on his shinne a mormal hadde he.
For blanc manger that made he with the best.

A Shipman was ther, woned fer by West:
For ought I wote, he was of Dertemouth.
He rode upon a rouncie, as he couthe,
All in a goune of falding to the knee.
A dagger hanging by a las hadde hee
About his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hote sommer hadde made his hewe al broun.

And certainly he was a good felaw.
Ful many a draught of win he hadde draw
From Burdeux ward, while that the chapman slepe.
Of nice conscience toke he no kepe.
If that he faught, and hadde the higher hand,
By water he sent hem home to every land.
But of his craft to reken wel his tides,
His stremes and his strandes him besides,
His herberwe, his mone, and his lodemanage,
Ther was non swiche, from Hull unto Cartage.
Hardy he was, and wise, I undertake:
With many a tempest hadde his berd be shake.
He knew wel alle the havens, as they were,
Fro Gotland, to the Cape de finistere,
And every creke in Bretagne and in Spaine:
His barge ycleped was the Magdelaine.

With us ther was a DOCTOUR OF PHISIKE,
In all this world ne was ther non him like
To speke of phisike, and of surgerie:
For he was grounded in astronomie.
He kept his patient a ful gret del
In houres by his magike naturel.
Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent
Of his images for his patient.
He knew the cause of every maladie,

Were it of cold, or hote, or moist, or drie,
And wher engendred, and of what humour,
He was a veray parfite practisour.
The cause yknowe, and of his harm the rote,
Anon he gave to the sike man his bote.
Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries
To send him dragges, and his lettuaries,
For eche of hem made other for to winne:
Hir frendship n'as not newe to beginne.
Wel knew he the old Esculapius,
And Dioscorides, and eke Rufus;
Old Hippocras, Hali, and Gallien;
Serapion, Rasis, and Avicen;
Averrois, Damascene, and Constantin;
Bernard, and Gatisden, and Gilbertin.
Of his diete mesurable was he,
For it was of no superfluitee,
But of gret nourishing, and digestible.
His studie was but litel on the Bible.
In sanguin and in perse he clad was alle
Lined with taffata, and with sendalle.
And yet he was but esy of dispence:
He kepte that he wan in the pestilence.
For gold in phisike is a cordial;
Therfore he loved gold in special.

A good WIF was ther OF beside BATHE,
But she was som del defe, and that was scathe.
Of cloth making she hadde swiche an haunt,
She passed hem of Ipres, and of Gaunt.
In all the parish wif ne was ther non,
That to the offring before hire shulde gon,
And if ther did, certain so wroth was she,
That she was out of alle charitee.
Hire coverchiefs weren ful fine of ground;
I dorste swere, they weyeden a pound;
That on the Sonday were upon hire hede.
Hire hosen weren of fine scarlet rede,
Ful streite yteyed, and shoon ful moist and newe.
Bold was hire face, and fayre and rede of hew.
She was a worthy woman all hire live,
Housbondes at the chirche dore had she had five,
Withouten other compagnie in youthe.
But therof nedeth not to speke as nouthe.
And thries hadde she ben at Jerusaleme.
She hadde passed many a strange streme.
At Rome she hadde ben, and at Boloine,
In Galice at Seint James, and at Coloine.
She coude moche of wandring by the way.
Gat-tothed was she, sothly for to say.
Upon an ambler esily she sat,
Ywimpled wel, and on hire hede an hat,

As brode as is a bokeler, or a targe.
A fote-mantel about hire hippes large,
And on hire fete a pair of sporres sharpe.
In felawship wel coude she laughe and carpe
Of remedies of love she knew parchance,
For of that arte she coude the olde dance.

A good man ther was of religioun,
That was a poure PERSONE of a toun:
But riche he was of holy thought and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche.
His parishens devoutly wolde he teche.
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversite ful patient:
And swiche he was ypreved often sithes.
Ful loth were him to cursen for his tithes,
But rather wolde he yeven out of doute,
Unto his poure parishens aboute,
Of his offring, and eke of his substance.
He coude in litel thing have suffisance.
Wide was his parish, and houses fer asonder,
But he ne left nought for no rain ne thonder,
In sikenesse and in mischief to visite
The ferrest in his parish, moche and lite,
Upon his fete, and in his hand a staf.

This noble ensample to his shepe he yaf,
That first he wrought, and afterward he taught.
Out of the gospel he the wordes caught,
And this figure he added yet therto,
That if gold ruste, what shuld iren do?
For if a preest be foule, on whom we trust,
No wonder is a lewed man to rust:
And shame it is, if that a preest take kepe,
To see a shitten shepherd, and clene shepe:
Wel ought a preest ensample for to yeve,
By his clenenesse, how his shepe shulde live.
He sette not his benefice to hire,
And lette his shepe acombred in the mire,
And ran unto London, unto Seint Poules,
To seken him a chanterie for soules,
Or with a brotherhede to be withold:
But dwelt at home, and kepte wel his fold,
So that the wolf ne made it not miscarie.
He was a shepherd, and no mercenarie.
And though he holy were, and vertuous,
He was to sinful men not dispitous,
Ne of his speche dangerous ne digne,
But in his teching discrete and benigne.
To drawen folk to heven, with fairenesse,
By good ensample, was his besinesse:
But it were any persone obstinat,

What so he were of highe, or low estat,
Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nones.
A better preest I trowe that nowher non is.
He waited after no pompe ne reverence,
Ne maked him no spiced conscience,
But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
He taught, but first he folwed it himselve.

With him ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother,
That hadde ylaid of dong ful many a fother.
A trewe swinker, and a good was he,
Living in pees, and parfite charitee.
God loved he beste with alle his herte
At alle times, were it gain or smerte,
And than his neighebour right as himselve.
He wolde thresh, and therto dike, and delve,
For Cristes sake, for every poure wight,
Withouten hire, if it lay in his might.
His tithes paied he ful fayre and wel
Both of his propre swinke, and his catel.
In a tabard he rode upon a mere.
Ther was also a reve, and a millere,
A sompnour and a pardoner also,
A manciple, and myself, ther n'ere no mo.

The MILLER was a stout carl for the nones,

Ful bigge he was of braun, and eke of bones;
That proved wel, for over all ther he came,
At wrastling he wold bere away the ram.
He was short shuldered brode, a thikke gnarre,
Ther n'as no dore, that he n'olde heve of barre,
Or breke it at a renning with his hede.
His berd as any sowe or fox was rede,
And therto brode, as though it were a spade.
Upon the cop right of his nose he hade
A wert, and theron stode a tufte of heres,
Rede as the bristles of a sowes eres.
His nose-thirles blacke were and wide.
A swerd and bokeler bare he by his side.
His mouth as wide was as a forneis.
He was a jangler, and a goliardeis,
And that was most of sinne, and harlotries.
Wel coude he stelen corne, and tollen thries.
And yet he had a thomb of gold parde.
A white cote and a blew hode wered he.
A baggepipe wel coude he blowe and soune,
And therwithall he brought us out of toune.

A gentil MANCIPLE was ther of a temple,
Of which achatours mighten take ensemple
For to ben wise in bying of vitaille.
For whether that he paide, or toke by taille,

Algate he waited so in his achate,
That he was ay before in good estate.
Now is not that of God a ful fayre grace,
That swiche a lewed mannes wit shal pace
The wisdom of an hepe of lered men?
Of maisters had he mo than thries ten,
That were of lawe expert and curious:
Of which ther was a dosein in that hous,
Worthy to ben stewardes of rent and lond
Of any lord that is in Englelond,
To maken him live by his propre good,
In honour detteles, but if he were wood,
Or live as scarsly, as him list desire;
And able for to helpen all a shire
In any cas that mighte fallen or happe;
And yet this manciple sette hir aller cappe.

The Reve was a slendre colerike man,
His berd was shave as neighe as ever he can.
His here was by his eres round yshorne.
His top was docked like a preest beforne.
Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,
Ylike a staff, ther was no calf ysene.
Wel coude he kepe a garner and a binne:
Ther was non auditour coude on him winne.
Wel wiste he by the drought, and by the rain,

The yelding of his seed, and of his grain.
His lordes shepe, his nete, and his deirie,
His swine, his hors, his store, and his pultrie,
Were holly in this reves governing,
And by his covenant yave he rekening,
Sin that his lord was twenty yere of age;
Ther coude no man bring him in arerage.
Ther n'as baillif, ne herde, ne other hine,
That he ne knew his sleight and his covine:
They were adradde of him, as of the deth.
His wonning was ful fayre upon an heth,
With grene trees yshadewed was his place.
He coude better than his lord pourchace.
Ful riche he was ystored privily.
His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly,
To yeve and lene him of his owen good,
And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.
In youthe he lerned hadde a good mistere.
He was a wel good wright, a carpentere.
This reve sate upon a right good stot,
That was all pomelee grey, and highte Scot.
A long surcote of perse upon he hade,
And by his side he bare a rusty blade.
Of Norfolk was this reve, of which I tell,
Beside a toun, men clepen Baldeswell.

Tucked he was, as is a frere, aboute,
And ever he rode the hinderest of the route.

A Sompnour was ther with us in that place,
That hadde a fire-red cherubinnes face,
For sauseflem he was, with eyen narwe.
As hote he was, and likerous as a sparwe,
With scalled browes blake, and pilled berd:
Of his visage children were sore aferd.
Ther n'as quiksilver, litarge, ne brimston,
Boras, ceruse, ne oile of tartre non,
Ne oinement that wolde clense or bite,
That him might helpen of his whelkes white,
Ne of the knobbes sitting on his chekes.
Wel loved he garlike, onions, and lekes,
And for to drinke strong win as rede as blood.
Than wolde he speke, and crie as he were wood.
And whan that he wel dronken had the win,
Than wold he speken no word but Latin.
A fewe termes coude he, two or three,
That he had lerned out of som decree;
No wonder is, he herd it all the day.
And eke ye knowen wel, how that a jay
Can clepen watte, as wel as can the pope.
But who so wolde in other thing him grope,

Than hadde he spent all his philosophie,
Ay, *Questio quid juris*, wolde he crie.
He was a gentil harlot and a kind;
A better felaw shulde a man not find.
He wolde suffre for a quart of wine,
A good felaw to have his concubine
A twelve month, and excuse him at the full.
Ful prively a finch eke coude he pull.
And if he found owhere a good felawe,
He wolde techen him to have non awe
In swiche a cas of the archedekenes curse;
But if a mannes soule were in his purse;
For in his purse he shulde ypunished be.
Purse is the archedekens helle, said he.
But wel I wote, he lied right in dede:
Of cursing ought eche gilty man him drede.
For curse wol sle right as assoiling saveth,
And also ware him of a *significavit*.
In danger hadde he at his owen gise
The yonge girles of the diocise,
And knew hir conseil, and was of hir rede.
A gerlond hadde he sette upon his hede,
As gret as it were for an alestake:
A bokeler hadde he made him of a cake.

With him ther rode a gentil PARDONERE

Of Rouncevall, his frend and his compere,
That streit was comen from the court of Rome.
Ful loude he sang, Come hither, love, to me.
This sompnour bare to him a stiff burdoun,
Was never trompe of half so gret a soun.
This pardoner had here as yelwe as wax,
But smoth it heng, as doth a strike of flax:
By unces heng his lokkes that he hadde,
And therwith he his shulders overspradde.
Ful thinne it lay, by culpons on and on,
But hode, for jolite, ne wered he non,
For it was trussed up in his wallet.
Him thought he rode al of the newe get,
Dishevele, sauf his cappe, he rode all bare.
Swiche glaring eyen hadde he, as an hare.
A vernicle hadde he sewed upon his cappe.
His wallet lay beforne him in his lappe,
Bret-ful of pardon come from Rome al hote.
A vois he hadde, as smale has hath a gote.
No berd hadde he, ne never non shulde have,
As smothe it was as it were newe shave;
I trowe he were a gelding or a mare.
But of his craft, fro Berwike unto Ware,
Ne was ther swiche an other pardonere.
For in his male he hadde a pilwebere,
Which, as he saide, was oure ladies veil:

He saide, he hadde a gobbet of the seyl
Thatte Seint Peter had, whan that he went
Upon the see, till Jesu Crist him hent.
He had a crois of laton ful of stones,
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.
But with these relikes, whanne that he fond
A poure persone dwelling up on lond,
Upon a day he gat him more moneie
Than that the persone gat in monethes tweie.
And thus with fained flattering and japes,
He made the persone, and the peple, his apes.
But trewely to tellen atte last,
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiast.
Wel coude he rede a lesson or a storie,
But alderbest he sang an offertorie:
For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,
He muste preche, and wel afile his tonge,
To winne silver, as he right wel coude:
Therfore he sang the merier and loude.

Now have I told you shortly in a clause,
Th'estat, th'araie, the nombre, and eke the cause
Why that assembled was this compagnie
In Southwerk at this gentil hostelrie,
That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.
But now is time to you for to telle,
How that we baren us that ilke night,

Whan we were in that hostelrie alight.
And after wol I telle of our viage,
And all the remenant of our pilgrimage.
But firste I praie you of your curtesie,
That ye ne arette it not my vilanie,
Though that I plainly speke in this matere,
To tellen you hir wordes and hir chere;
Ne though I speke hir wordes proprely.
For this ye knowen al so wel as I,
Who so shall telle a tale after a man,
He moste reherse, as neighe as ever he can,
Everich word, if it be in his charge,
All speke he never so rudely and so large;
Or elles he moste tellen his tale untrewe,
Or feinen thinges, or finden wordes newe.
He may not spare, although he were his brother.
He moste as wel sayn o word, as an other.
Crist spake himself ful brode in holy writ,
And wel ye wote no vilanie is it.
Eke Plato sayeth, who so can him rede,
The wordes moste ben cosin to the dede.
Also I praie you to forgive it me,
All have I not sette folk in hir degree,
Here in this tale, as that they shulden stonde.
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.

Gret chere made oure hoste us everich on,

And to the souper sette he us anon:
And served us with vitaille of the beste.
Strong was the win, and wel to drinke us leste.
A semely man our hoste was with alle
For to han ben a marshal in an halle.
A large man he was with eyen stepe,
A fairer burgeis is ther non in Chepe:
Bold of his speche, and wise and wel ytaught,
And of manhood him lacked righte naught.
Eke therto was he right a mery man,
And after souper plaien he began,
And spake of mirthe amonges other thinges,
Whan that we hadden made our rekeninges;
And saide thus; Now, lordinges, trewely
Ye ben to me welcome right hertily:
For by my trouthe, if that I shal not lie,
I saw nat this yere swiche a compagnie
At ones in this herberwe, as is now.
Fayn wolde I do you mirthe, and I wiste how.
And of a mirthe I am right now bethought,
To don you ese, and it shall coste you nought.
Ye gon to Canterbury; God you spede,
The blisful martyr quite you your mede;
And wel I wot, as ye gon by the way,
Ye shapen you to talken and to play:
For trewely comfort ne mirthe is non,

To riden by the way dombe as the ston:
And therfore wold I maken you disport,
As I said erst, and don you some comfort.
And if you liketh alle by on assent
Now for to stonden at my jugement:
And for to werchen as I shal you say
To-morwe, whan ye riden on the way,
Now by my faders soule that is ded,
But ye be mery, smiteth of my hed.
Hold up your hondes withouten more speche.
Our conseil was not longe for to seche:
Us thought it was not worth to make it wise,
And granted him withouten more avise,
And bad him say his verdit, as him leste.
Lordinges, (quod he) now herkeneth for the beste;
But take it nat, I pray you, in disdain;
This is the point, to speke it plat and plain,
That eche of you to shorten with youre way,
In this viage, shal tellen tales tway,
To Canterbury ward, I mene it so,
And homeward he shall tellen other two,
Of aventures that whilom han befalle.
And which of you that bereth him best of alle,
That is to sayn, that telleth in this cas
Tales of best sentence and most solas,
Shal have a souper at youre aller cost

Here in this place sitting by this post,
Whan that ye comen agen from Canterbury.
And for to maken you the more mery,
I wol myselven gladly with you ride,
Right at min owen cost, and be your gide.
And who that wol my jugement withsay,
Shal pay for alle we spenden by the way.
And if ye vouchesauf that it be so,
Telle me anon withouten wordes mo,
And I wol erly shapen me therfore.
This thing was granted, and our othes swore
With ful glad herte, and praiden him also,
That he wold vouchesauf for to don so,
And that he wolde ben our governour,
And of our tales juge and reportour,
And sette a souper at a certain pris;
And we wol reuled ben at his devise,
In highe and lowe: and thus by on assent,
We ben accorded to his jugement.
And therupon the win was fette anon.
We dronken, and to reste wenten eche on,
Withouten any lenger tarying.
A-morwe whan the day began to spring,
Up rose our hoste, and was our aller cok,
And gaderd us togeder in a flok,
And forth we riden a litel more than pas,

Unto the watering of Seint Thomas:
And ther our hoste began his hors arest,
And saide; lordes, herkeneth if you lest.
Ye wete your forword, and I it record.
If even-song and morwe-song accord,
Let se now who shal telle the first tale.
As ever mote I drinken win or ale,
Who so is rebel to my jugement,
Shal pay for alle that by the way is spent.
Now draweth cutte, or that ye forther twinne.
He which that hath the shortest shal beginne.
Sire knight, (quod he) my maister and my lord,
Now draweth cutte, for that is min accord.
Cometh nere, (quod he) my lady prioresse,
And ye, sire clerk, let be your shamefastnesse,
Ne studieth nought; lay hand to, every man.
Anon to drawen every wight began,
And shortly for to tellen as it was,
Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,
The sothe is this, the cutte felle on the knight,
Of which ful blith and glad was every wight;
And tell he must his tale as was reson,
By forword, and by composition,
As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes mo?
And whan this good man saw that it was so,
As he that wise was and obedient

To kepe his forword by his free assent,
He saide; sithen I shal begin this game,
What? welcome be the cutte a goddes name.
Now let us ride, and herkeneth what I say.
And with that word we riden forth our way;
And he began with right a mery chere
His tale anon, and saide as ye shul here.

THE KNIGHTES TALE.

WHILOM, as olde stories tellen us,
Ther was a duk that highte Theseus.
Of Athenes he was lord and governour,
And in his time swiche a conquerour,
That greter was ther non under the sonne.
Ful many a riche contree had he wonne.
What with his wisdom and his chevalrie,
He conquerd all the regne of Feminie,
That whilom was ycleped Scythia;
And wedded the fresshe quene Ipolita,
And brought hire home with him to his contree
With mochel glorie and gret solempnitee,
And eke hire yonge suster Emelie.
And thus with victorie and with melodie
Let I this worthy duk to Athenes ride,
And all his host, in armes him beside.

And certes, if it n'ere to long to here,
I wolde have told you fully the manere,
How wonnen was the regne of Feminie,
By Theseus, and by his chevalrie;
And of the grete bataille for the nones
Betwix Athenes and the Amasones;
And how asseged was Ipolita
The faire hardy quene of Scythia;
And of the feste, that was at hire wedding,
And of the temple at hire home coming.
But all this thing I moste as now forbere.
I have, God wot, a large feld to ere;
And weke ben the oxen in my plow.
The remenant of my tale is long ynow.
I wil not letten eke non of this route.
Let every felaw telle his tale aboute,
And let se now who shal the souper winne.
Ther as I left, I wil agen beginne.

This duk, of whom I made mentioun,
Whan he was comen almost to the toun,
In all his wele and in his moste pride,
He was ware, as he cast his eye aside,
Wher that ther kneled in the highe wey
A compagnie of ladies, twey and twey,
Eche after other, clad in clothes blake:
But swiche a crie and swiche a wo they make,

That in this world n'is creature living,
That ever herd swiche another waimenting.
And of this crie ne wolde they never stenten,
Till they the reines of his bridel henten.
What folk be ye that at min home coming
Perturben so my feste with crying?
Quod Theseus; have ye so grete envie
Of min honour, that thus complaine and crie?
Or who hath you misboden, or offended?
Do telle me, if that it may be amended;
And why ye be thus clothed alle in blake?
The oldest lady of hem all than spake,
Whan she had swouned, with a dedly chere,
That it was reuthe for to seen and here.
She sayde; lord, to whom fortune hath yeven
Victorie, and as a conquerour to liven,
Nought greveth us your glorie and your honour;
But we beseke you of mercie and socour.
Have mercie on our woe and our distresse.
Som drope of pitee, thurgh thy gentillesse,
Upon us wretched wimmen let now falle.
For certes, lord, ther n'is non of us alle,
That she n'hath ben a duchesse or a quene;
Now be we caitives, as it is wel sene:
Thanked be fortune, and hire false whele,
That non estat ensureth to be wele.

And certes, lord, to abiden your presence
Here in this temple of the goddesse Clemence
We han ben waiting all this fourtenight:
Now helpe us, lord, sin it lieth in thy might.
I wretched wight, that wepe and waile thus,
Was whilom wif to king Capaneus,
That starfe at Thebes, cursed be that day:
And alle we that ben in this aray,
And maken all this lamentation,
We losten alle our husbondes at that toun,
While that the sege therabouten lay.
And yet now the olde Creon, wala wa!
That lord is now of Thebes the citee,
Fulfilled of ire and of iniquitee,
He for despit, and for his tyrannie,
To don the ded bodies a vilanie,
Of alle our lordes, which that ben yslawe,
Hath alle the bodies on an hepe ydrawe,
And will not suffren hem by non assent
Neyther to ben yberied, ne ybrent,
But maketh houndes ete hem in despite.
And with that word, withouten more respite
They fallen groff, and crien pitously;
Have on us wretched wimmen som mercy,
And let our sorwe sinken in thin herte.
This gentil duk doun from his courser sterte

With herte pitous, whan he herd hem speke.
Him thoughte that his herte wolde all to-breke,
Whan he saw hem so pitous and so mate,
That whilom weren of so gret estate.
And in his armes he hem all up hente,
And hem comforted in ful good entente,
And swore his oth, as he was trewe knight,
He wolde don so ferforthly his might
Upon the tyrant Creon hem to wreke,
That all the peple of Grece shulde speke,
How Creon was of Theseus yserved,
As he that hath his deth ful wel deserved.
And right anon withouten more abode
His banner he displaide, and forth he rode
To Thebes ward, and all his host beside:
No nere Athenes n'olde he go ne ride,
Ne take his ese fully half a day,
But onward on his way that night he lay:
And sent anon Ipolita the quene,
And Emelie hire yonge sister shene
Unto the toun of Athenes for to dwell:
And forth he rit; ther n'is no more to tell.
The red statue of Mars with spere and targe
So shineth in his white banner large,
That all the feldes gliteren up and doun:
And by his banner borne is his penon

Of gold ful riche, in which ther was ybete
The Minotaure which that he slew in Crete.
Thus rit this duk, thus rit this conquerour,
And in his host of chevalrie the flour,
Til that he came to Thebes, and alight
Fayre in a feld, ther as he thought to fight.
But shortly for to speken of this thing,
With Creon, which that was of Thebes king,
He fought, and slew him manly as a knight
In plaine bataille, and put his folk to flight:
And by assaut he wan the citee after,
And rent adoun bothe wall and sparre, and rafter;
And to the ladies he restored again
The bodies of hir housbondes that were slain,
To don the obsequies, as was tho the gise.
But it were all to long for to devise
The grete clamour, and the waimenting,
Whiche that the ladies made at the brenning
Of the bodies, and the gret honour,
That Theseus the noble conquerour
Doth to the ladies, whan they from him wente:
But shortly for to telle is min entente.
Whan that this worthy duk, this Theseus,
Hath Creon slaine, and wonnen Thebes thus,
Still in the feld he toke all night his reste,
And did with all the contree as him leste.

To ransake in the tas of bodies dede,
Hem for to stripe of harneis and of wede,
The pillours dide hir besinesse and cure,
After the bataille and discomfiture.
And so befell, that in the tas they found,
Thurgh girt with many a grevous blody wound,
Two yonge knightes ligging by and by,
Bothe in on armes, wrought ful richely:
Of whiche two, Arcita highte that on,
And he that other highte Palamon.
Not fully quik, ne fully ded they were,
But by hir cote-armure, and by hir gere,
The heraudes knew hem wel in special,
As tho that weren of the blod real
Of Thebes, and of sustren two yborne.
Out of the tas the pillours han hem torne,
And han hem caried soft unto the tente
Of Theseus, and he ful sone hem sente
To Athenes, for to dwellen in prison
Perpetuel, he n'olde no raunson.
And whan this worthy duk had thus ydon,
He toke his host, and home he rit anon
With laurer crouned as a conquerour;
And ther he liveth in joye and in honour
Terme of his lif; what nedeth wordes mo?
And in a tour, in anguish and in wo,

Dwellen this Palamon and eke Arcite,
For evermo, ther may no gold hem quite.
Thus passeth yere by yere, and day by day,
Till it felle ones in a morwe of May
That Emelie, that fayrer was to sene
Than is the lilie upon his stalke grene,
And fressher than the May with floures newe,
(For with the rose colour strof hire hewe;
I n'ot which was the finer of hem two)
Er it was day, as she was wont to do,
She was arisen, and all redy dight.
For May wol have no slogardie a-night.
The seson priketh every gentil herte,
And maketh him out of his slepe to sterte,
And sayth, arise, and do thin observance.
This maketh Emelie han remembrance
To don honour to May, and for to rise.
Yclothed was she fresshe for to devise.
Hire yelwe here was broided in a tresse,
Behind hire back, a yerde long I gesse.
And in the gardin at the sonne uprist
She walketh up and doun wher as hire list.
She gathereth floures, partie white and red,
To make a sotel gerlond for hire hed,
And as an angel hevenlich she song.
The grete tour, that was so thikke and strong,

Which of the castel was the chef dongeon,
(Wher as these knightes weren in prison,
Of which I tolde you, and tellen shal)
Was even joinant to the gardin wall,
Ther as this Emelie had hire playing.
Bright was the sonne, and clere that morwening,
And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
As was his wone, by leve of his gayler
Was risen, and romed in a chambre on high,
In which he all the noble citee sigh,
And eke the gardin, ful of branches grene,
Ther as this fresshe Emelia the shene
Was in hire walk, and romed up and doun.
This sorweful prisoner, this Palamon
Goth in his chambre roming to and fro,
And to himselfe complaining of his wo:
That he was borne, ful oft he sayd, alas!
And so befell, by aventure or cas,
That thurgh a window thikke of many a barre
Of yren gret, and square as any sparre,
He cast his eyen upon Emelia,
And therwithal he blent and cried, a!
As though he stongen were unto the herte.
And with that crie Arcite anon up sterte,
And saide, cosin min, what eyleth thee,
That art so pale and dedly for to see?

Why cridest thou? who hath thee don offence?
For goddes love, take all in patience
Our prison, for it may non other be.
Fortune hath yeven us this adversite.
Som wikke aspect or disposition
Of Saturne, by som constellation,
Hath yeven us this, although we had it sworn,
So stood the heven whan that we were born,
We moste endure: this is the short and plain.
This Palamon answerde, and sayde again;
Cosin, forsoth of this opinion
Thou hast a vaine imagination.
This prison caused me not for to crie.
But I was hurt right now thurghout min eye
Into min herte, that wol my bane be.
The fayrnesse of a lady that I se
Yond in the gardin roming to and fro,
Is cause of all my crying and my wo.
I n'ot whe'r she be woman or goddesse.
But Venus is it, sothly, as I gesse.
And therwithall on knees adoun he fill,
And sayde: Venus, if it be your will
You in this gardin thus to transfigure,
Beforn me sorweful wretched creature,
Out of this prison helpe that we may scape.
And if so be our destinee be shape

By eterne word to dien in prison,
Of our lignage have som compassion,
That is so low ybrought by tyrannie.
And with that word Arcita gan espie
Wher as this lady romed to and fro.
And with that sight hire beautee hurt him so,
That if that Palamon were wounded sore,
Arcite is hurt as moche as he, or more.
And with a sigh he sayde pitously:
The fresshe beautee sleth me sodenly
Of hire that rometh in the yonder place.
And but I have hire mercie and hire grace,
That I may seen hire at the leste way,
I n'am but ded; ther n'is no more to say.
This Palamon, whan he these wordes herd,
Dispitously he loked, and answerd:
Whether sayest thou this in ernest or in play?
Nay, quod Arcite, in ernest by my fay.
God helpe me so, me lust full yvel pley.
This Palamon gan knit his browes twey.
It were, quod he, to thee no gret honour
For to be false, ne for to be traytour
To me, that am thy cosin and thy brother
Ysworne ful depe, and eche of us to other,
That never for to dien in the peine,
Til that the deth departen shal us tweine,

Neyther of us in love to hindre other,
Ne in non other cas, my leve brother;
But that thou shuldest trewely forther me
In every cas, as I shuld forther thee.
This was thin oth, and min also certain;
I wot it wel, thou darst it not withsain.
Thus art thou of my conseil out of doute.
And now thou woldest falsly ben aboute
To love my lady, whom I love and serve,
And ever shal, til that min herte sterve.
Now certes, false Arcite, thou shalt not so.
I loved hire firste, and tolde thee my wo
As to my conseil, and my brother sworne
To forther me, as I have told beforne.
For which thou art ybounden as a knight
To helpen me, if it lie in thy might,
Or elles art thou false, I dare wel sain.
This Arcita full proudly spake again.
Thou shalt, quod he, be rather false than I.
And thou art false, I tell the utterly.
For *par amour* I loved hire first or thou.
What wolt thou sayn? thou wisted nat right now
Whether she were a woman or a goddesse.
Thin is affection of holinesse,
And min is love, as to a creature:
For which I tolde thee min aventure

As to my cosin, and my brother sworne.
I pose, that thou lovedest hire beforne:
Wost thou not wel the olde clerkes sawe,
That who shall give a lover any lawe?
Love is a greter lawe by my pan,
Then may be yeven of any erthly man:
And therfore positif lawe, and swiche decree
Is broken all day for love in eche degree.
A man moste nedes love maugre his hed.
He may not fleen it, though he shuld be ded,
All be she maid, or widewe, or elles wif.
And eke it is not likely all thy lif
To stonden in hire grace, no more shal I:
For wel thou wost thyselven verily,
That thou and I be damned to prison
Perpetuel, us gaineth no raunson.
We strive, as did the houndes for the bone,
They fought all day, and yet hir part was none.
Ther came a kyte, while that they were so wrothe,
And bare away the bone betwix hem bothe.
And therfore at the kinges court, my brother,
Eche man for himself, ther is non other.
Love if thee lust; for I love and ay shal:
And sothly, leve brother, this is al.
Here in this prison mosten we endure,
And everich of us take his aventure.

Gret was the strif, and long betwix hem twey,
If that I hadde leiser for to sey:
But to th' effect. It happed on a day,
(To tell it you as shortly as I may)
A worthy duk that highte Perithous,
That felaw was to this duk Theseus
Sin thilke day that they were children lite,
Was come to Athenes, his felaw to visite,
And for to play, as he was wont to do,
For in this world he loved no man so:
And he loved him as tendrely again.
So wel they loved, as olde bokes sain,
That whan that on was ded, sothly to telle,
His felaw wente and sought him doun in helle:
But of that storie list me not to write.
Duk Perithous loved wel Arcite,
And had him knowe at Thebes yere by yere:
And finally at request and praiere
Of Perithous, withouten any raunson
Duk Theseus him let out of prison,
Frely to gon, wher that him list over all,
In swiche a gise, as I you tellen shall.
This was the forword, plainly for to endite,
Betwixen Theseus and him Arcite:
That if so were, that Arcite were yfound
Ever in his lif, by day or night, o stound

In any contree of this Theseus,
And he were caught, it was accorded thus,
That with a swerde he shuld lese his hed;
Ther was non other remedie ne rede.
But taketh his leve, and homeward he him spedde;
Let him beware, his nekke lieth to wedde.
How gret a sorwe suffereth now Arcite?
The deth he feleth thurgh his herte smite;
He wepeth, waileth, crieth pitously;
To sleen himself he waiteth prively.
He said; Alas the day that I was borne!
Now is my prison werse than beforne:
Now is me shape eternally to dwelle
Not only in purgatorie, but in helle.
Alas! that ever I knew Perithous.
For elles had I dwelt with Theseus
Yfetered in his prison evermo.
Than had I ben in blisse, and not in wo.
Only the sight of hire, whom that I serve,
Though that I never hire grace may deserve,
Wold have sufficed right ynough for me.
O dere cosin Palamon, quod he,
Thin is the victorie of this aventure.
Ful blisful in prison maiest thou endure:
In prison? certes nay, but in paradise.
Wel hath fortune yturned thee the dise,

That hast the sight of hire, and I th'absence.
For possible is, sin thou hast hire presence,
And art a knight, a worthy and an able,
That by som cas, sin fortune is changeable,
Thou maiest to thy desir somtime atteine.
But I that am exiled, and barreine
Of alle grace, and in so gret despaire,
That ther n'is erthe, water, fire, ne aire,
Ne creature, that of hem maked is,
That may me hele, or don comfort in this,
Wel ought I sterve in wanhope and distresse.
Farewel my lif, my lust, and my gladnesse.
Alas, why plainen men so in commune
Of purveyance of God, or of fortune,
That yeveth hem ful oft in many a gise
Wel better than they can hemself devise?
Som man desireth for to have richesse,
That cause is of his murdre or gret siknesse.
And som man wold out of his prison fayn,
That in his house is of his meinie slain.
Infinite harmes ben in this matere.
We wote not what thing that we praien here.
We faren as he that dronke is as a mous.
A dronken man wot wel he hath an hous,
But he ne wot which is the right way thider,
And to a dronken man the way is slider.

And certes in this world so faren we.
We seken fast after felicite,
But we go wrong ful often trewely.
Thus we may sayen alle, and namely I,
That wende, and had a gret opinion,
That if I might escapen fro prison
Than had I ben in joye and parfite hele,
Ther now I am exiled fro my wele.
Sin that I may not seen you, Emelie,
I n'am but ded; ther n'is no remedie.
Upon that other side Palamon,
Whan that he wist Arcita was agon,
Swiche sorwe he maketh, that the grete tour
Resouned of his yelling and clamour.
The pure fetters on his shinnes grete
Were of his bitter salte teres wete.
Alas! quod he, Arcita cosin min,
Of all our strif, God wot, the frute is thin.
Thou walkest now in Thebes at thy large,
And of my wo thou yevest litel charge.
Thou maist, sith thou hast wisdom and manhede,
Assemblen all the folk of our kinrede,
And make a werre so sharpe on this contree,
That by som aventure, or som tretee,
Thou maist have hire to lady and to wif,
For whom that I must nedes lese my lif.

For as by way of possibilitee,
Sith thou art at thy large of prison free,
And art a lord, gret is thin avantage,
More than is min, that sterve here in a cage.
For I may wepe and waile, while that I live,
With all the wo that prison may me yeve,
And eke with peine that love me yeveth also,
That doubleth all my tourment and my wo.
Therwith the fire of jalousie up sterte
Within his brest, and hent him by the herte
So woodly, that he like was to behold
The box-tree, or the ashen ded and cold.
Than said he; O cruel goddes, that governe
This world with binding of your word eterne,
And writen in the table of athamant
Your parlement and your eterne grant,
What is mankind more unto you yhold
Than is the shepe, that rouketh in the fold?
For slain is man, right as another beest,
And dwelleth eke in prison, and arrest,
And hath siknesse, and gret adversite,
And oftentimes gilteles parde.
What governance is in this prescience,
That gilteles turmenteth innocence?
And yet encreseth this all my penance,
That man is bounden to his observance

For Goddes sake to leten of his will,
Ther as a beest may all his lust fulfill.
And whan a beest is ded, he hath no peine;
But man after his deth mote wepe and pleine,
Though in this world he have care and wo:
Withouten doute it maye stonden so.
The answer of this lete I to divines,
But wel I wote, that in this world gret pine is.
Alas! I see a serpent or a thefe,
That many a trewe man hath do meschefe,
Gon at his large, and wher him lust may turn.
But I moste ben in prison thurgh Saturn,
And eke thurgh Juno, jalous and eke wood,
That hath wel neye destruied all the blood
Of Thebes, with his waste walles wide.
And Venus sleeth me on that other side
For jalousie, and fere of him Arcite.
Now wol I stent of Palamon a lite,
And leten him in his prison still dwelle,
And of Arcita forth I wol you telle.
The sommer passeth, and the nightes long
Encresen double wise the peines strong
Both of the lover, and of the prisoner.
I n'ot which hath the wofuller mistere.
For shortly for to say, this Palamon
Perpetuelly is damned to prison,

In chaines and in fetters to ben ded;
And Arcite is exiled on his hed
For evermore as out of that contree,
Ne never more he shal his lady see.
You lovers axe I now this question,
Who hath the werse, Arcite or Palamon?
That on may se his lady day by day,
But in prison moste he dwellen alway.
That other wher him lust may ride or go,
But sen his lady shal he never mo.
Now demeth as you liste, ye that can,
For I wol tell you forth as I began.
Whan that Arcite to Thebes comen was,
Ful oft a day he swelt and said alas,
For sen his lady shal he never mo.
And shortly to concluden all his wo,
So mochel sorwe hadde never creature,
That is or shal be, while the world may dure.
His slepe, his mete, his drinke is him byraft,
That lene he wex, and drie as is a shaft.
His eyen holwe, and grisly to behold,
His hewe falwe, and pale as ashen cold,
And solitary he was, and ever alone,
And wailing all the night, making his mone.
And if he herde song or instrument,
Than wold he wepe, he mighte not be stent.

So feble were his spirites, and so low,
And changed so, that no man coude know
His speche ne his vois, though men it herd.
And in his gere, for all the world he ferd
Nought only like the lovers maladie
Of Ereos, but rather ylike manie,
Engendred of humours melancolike,
Beforne his hed in his celle fantastike.
And shortly turned was all up so doun
Both habit and eke dispositioun
Of him, this woful lover dan Arcite.
What shuld I all day of his wo endite?
Whan he endured had a yere or two
This cruel torment, and this peine and wo,
At Thebes, in his contree, as I said,
Upon a night in slepe as he him laid,
Him thought how that the winged god Mercury
Beforne him stood, and bad him to be mery.
His slepy yerde in hond he bare upright;
An hat he wered upon his heres bright.
Arraied was this god (as he toke kepe)
As he was whan that Argus toke his slepe;
And said him thus: To Athenes shalt thou wende;
Ther is thee shapen of thy wo an ende.
And with that word Arcite awoke and stert.
Now trewely how sore that ever me smert,

Quod he, to Athenes right now wol I fare.
Ne for no drede of deth shal I not spare
To se my lady, that I love and serve;
In hire presence I rekke not to sterve.
And with that word he caught a gret mirrour,
And saw that changed was all his colour,
And saw his visage all in another kind.
And right anon it ran him in his mind,
That sith his face was so disfigured
Of maladie the which he had endured,
He mighte wel, if that he bare him lowe,
Live in Athenes evermore unknowe,
And sen his lady wel nigh day by day.
And right anon he changed his aray,
And clad him as a poure labourer.
And all alone, save only a squier,
That knew his privitee and all his cas,
Which was disguised pourely as he was,
To Athenes is he gon the nexte way.
And to the court he went upon a day,
And at the gate he proffered his service,
To drugge and draw, what so men wold devise.
And shortly of this matere for to sayn,
He fell in office with a chamberlain,
The which that dwelling was with Emelie.
For he was wise, and coude sone espie

Of every servant, which that served hire.
Wel coude he hewen wood, and water bere,
For he was yonge and mighty for the nones,
And therto he was strong and big of bones
To don that any wight can him devise.
A yere or two he was in this service,
Page of the chambre of Emelie the bright;
And Philostrate he sayde that he hight.
But half so wel beloved a man as he,
Ne was ther never in court of his degre.
He was so gentil of conditioun,
That thurghout all the court was his renoun.
They sayden that it were a charite
That Theseus wold enhaunsen his degre,
And putten him in worshipful service,
Ther as he might his vertues exercise.
And thus within a while his name is spronge
Both of his dedes, and of his good tonge,
That Theseus hath taken him so ner
That of his chambre he made him a squier,
And gave him gold to mainteine his degre;
And eke men brought him out of his contre
Fro yere to yere ful prively his rent.
But honestly and sleighly he it spent,
That no man wondred how that he it hadde.
And thre yere in this wise his lif he ladde,

And bare him so in pees and eke in werre,
Ther n'as no man that Theseus hath derre.
And in this blisse let I now Arcite,
And speke I wol of Palamon a lite.
In derkenesse and horrible and strong prison
This seven yere hath sitten Palamon,
Forpined, what for love and for distresse.
Who feleth double sorwe and hevinesse
But Palamon? that love distraineth so,
That wood out of his wit he goth for wo,
And eke therto he is a prisonere
Perpetuell, not only for a yere.
Who coude rime in English proprely
His martirdom? forsoth it am not I,
Therfore I passe as lightly as I may.
It fell that in the seventh yere in May
The thridde night, (as olde bokes sayn,
That all this storie tellen more plain)
Were it by aventure or destinee,
(As, whan a thing is shapen, it shal be,)
That sone after the midnight, Palamon
By helping of a frend brake his prison,
And fleeth the cite faste as he may go,
For he had yeven drinke his gayler so
Of a clarre, made of a certain wine,
With Narcotikes and Opie of Thebes fine,

That all the night though that men wold him shake,
The gailer slept, he mighte not awake.
And thus he fleeth as faste as ever he may.
The night was short, and faste by the day,
That nedes cost he moste himselven hide.
And to a grove faste ther beside
With dredful foot than stalketh Palamon.
For shortly this was his opinion,
That in that grove he wold him hide all day,
And in the night than wold he take his way
To Thebes ward, his frendes for to preie
On Theseus to helpen him werreie.
And shortly, eyther he wold lese his lif,
Or winnen Emelie unto his wif.
This is the effect, and his entente plein.
Now wol I turnen to Arcite agein,
That litel wist how neighe was his care,
Til that fortune had brought him in the snare.
The besy larke, the messager of day,
Saleweth in hire song the morwe gray;
And firy Phebus riseth up so bright,
That all the orient laugheth of the sight,
And with his stremes drieth in the greves
The silver dropes, hanging on the leves,
And Arcite, that is in the court real
With Theseus the squier principal,

Is risen, and loketh on the mery day.
And for to don his observance to May,
Remembring on the point of his desire,
He on his courser, sterting as the fire,
Is ridden to the feldes him to pley,
Out of the court, were it a mile or twey.
And to the grove of which that I you told,
By aventure his way he gan to hold,
To maken him a gerlond of the greves,
Were it of woodbind or of hauthorn leves,
And loud he song agen the sonne shene.
O Maye, with all thy floures and thy grene,
Right welcome be thou faire freshe May,
I hope that I some grene here getten may.
And from his courser, with a lusty herte
Into the grove ful hastily he sterte,
And in a path he romed up and doun,
Ther as by aventure this Palamon
Was in a bush, that no man might him se,
For sore afered of his deth was he.
Nothing ne knew he that it was Arcite.
God wot he wold have trowed it ful lite.
But soth is said, gon sithen are many yeres,
That feld hath eyen, and the wood hath eres.
It is ful faire a man to bere him even,
For al day meten men at unset steven.

Ful litel wote Arcite of his felaw,
That was so neigh to herken of his saw,
For in the bush he sitteth now ful still.
Whan that Arcite had romed all his fill,
And songen all the roundel lustily,
Into a studie he fell sodenly,
As don these lovers in hir queinte geres,
Now in the crop, and now doun in the breres,
Now up, now doun, as boket in a well.
Right as the Friday, sothly for to tell,
Now shineth it, and now it raineth fast,
Right so can gery Venus overcast
The hertes of hire folk, right as hire day
Is gerfull, right so changeth she aray.
Selde is the Friday all the weke ylike.
Whan Arcite hadde ysonge, he gan to sike,
And set him doun withouten any more:
Alas! (quod he) the day that I was bore!
How longe, Juno, thurgh thy crueltee
Wilt thou werreien Thebes the citee?
Alas! ybrought is to confusion
The blood real of Cadme and Amphion:
Of Cadmus, which that was the firste man,
That Thebes built, or firste the toun began,
And of the citee firste was crouned king.
Of his linage am I, and his ofspring

By veray line, as of the stok real:
And now I am so caitif and so thral,
That he that is my mortal enemy,
I serve him as his squier pourely.
And yet doth Juno me wel more shame,
For I dare not beknowe min owen name,
But ther as I was wont to highte Arcite,
Now highte I Philostrat, not worth a mite.
Alas! thou fell Mars, alas! thou Juno,
Thus hath your ire our linage all fordo,
Save only me, and wretched Palamon,
That Theseus martireth in prison.
And over all this, to slen me utterly,
Love hath his firy dart so brenningly
Ystiked thurgh my trewe careful hert,
That shapen was my deth erst than my shert.
Ye slen me with your eyen, Emelie;
Ye ben the cause wherfore that I die.
Of all the remenant of min other care
Ne set I not the mountance of a tare,
So that I coud don ought to your plesance.
And with that word he fell doun in a trance
A longe time; and afterward up sterte
This Palamon, that thought thurghout his herte
He felt a colde swerd sodenly glide:
For ire he quoke, no lenger wolde he hide.

And whan that he had herd Arcites tale,
As he were wood, with face ded and pale,
He sterte him up out of the bushes thikke,
And sayde: False Arcite, false traitour wicke,
Now art thou hent, that lovest my lady so,
For whom that I have all this peine and wo,
And art my blood, and to my conseil sworn,
As I ful oft have told thee herebeforn,
And hast bejaped here duk Theseus,
And falsely changed hast thy name thus;
I wol be ded, or elles thou shalt die.
Thou shalt not love my lady Emelie,
But I wol love hire only and no mo.
For I am Palamon thy mortal fo.
And though that I no wepen have in this place,
But out of prison am astert by grace,
I drede nought, that eyther thou shalt die,
Or thou ne shalt nat loven Emelie.
Chese which thou wolt, for thou shalt not asterte.
This Arcite tho, with ful dispitous herte,
Whan he him knew, and had his tale herd,
As fers as a leon, pulled out a swerd,
And sayde thus; By God that sitteth above,
N'ere it that thou art sike, and wood for love,
And eke that thou no wepen hast in this place,
Thou shuldest never out of this grove pace,

That thou ne shuldest dien of min hond.
For I defie the suretee and the bond,
Which that thou saist that I have made to thee.
What? veray fool, thinke wel that love is free,
And I wol love hire maugre all thy might.
But, for thou art a worthy gentil knight,
And wilnest to darraine hire by bataille,
Have here my trouth, to-morwe I will not faille,
Withouten weting of any other wight,
That here I wol be founden as a knight,
And bringen harneis right ynough for thee;
And chese the beste, and leve the werste for me.
And mete and drinke this night wol I bring
Ynough for thee, and clothes for thy bedding.
And if so be that thou my lady win,
And sle me in this wode, ther I am in,
Thou maist wel have thy lady as for me.
  This Palamon answerd, I grant it thee.
And thus they ben departed til a-morwe,
Whan eche of hem hath laid his faith to borwe.
  O Cupide, out of alle charitee!
O regne, that wolt no felaw have with thee!
Ful soth is sayde, that love ne lordship
Wol nat, his thankes, have no felawship.
Wel finden that Arcite and Palamon.
  Arcite is ridden anon unto the toun,

And on the morwe, or it were day light,
Ful prively two harneis hath he dight,
Both suffisant and mete to darreine
The bataille in the feld betwix hem tweine.
And on his hors, alone as he was borne,
He carieth all this harneis him beforne;
And in the grove, at time and place ysette,
This Arcite and this Palamon ben mette.
Tho changen gan the colour of hir face.
Right as the hunter in the regne of Trace
That stondeth at a gappe with a spere,
Whan hunted is the lion or the bere,
And hereth him come rushing in the greves,
And breking bothe the boughes and the leves,
And thinketh, here cometh my mortal enemy,
Withouten faille, he must be ded or I;
For eyther I mote slen him at the gappe;
Or he mote slen me, if that me mishappe:
So ferden they, in changing of hir hewe,
As fer as eyther of hem other knewe.
Ther n'as no good day, ne so saluing.
But streit withouten wordes rehersing,
Everich of hem halpe to armen other,
As frendly, as he were his owen brother.
And after that, with sharpe speres strong
They foineden eche at other wonder long.

Thou mightest wenen, that this Palamon
In his fighting were as a wood leon,
And as a cruel tigre was Arcite:
As wilde bores gan they togeder smite,
That frothen white as fome for ire wood.
Up to the ancle foughte they in hir blood.
And in this wise I let hem fighting dwelle,
And forth I wol of Theseus you telle.
The destinee, ministre general,
That executeth in the world over al
The purveiance, that God hath sen beforne;
So strong it is, that though the world had sworne
The contrary of a thing by ya or nay,
Yet somtime it shall fallen on a day
That falleth nat efte in a thousand yere.
For certainly our appetites here,
Be it of werre, or pees, or hate, or love,
All is this ruled by the sight above.
This mene I now by mighty Theseus,
That for to hunten is so desirous,
And namely at the grete hart in May,
That in his bed ther daweth him no day,
That he n'is clad, and redy for to ride
With hunte and horne, and houndes him beside.
For in his hunting hath he swiche delite,
That it is all his joye and appetite

To ben himself the grete hartes bane,
For after Mars he serveth now Diane.
Clere was the day, as I have told or this,
And Theseus, with alle joye and blis,
With his Ipolita, the fayre quene,
And Emelie, yclothed all in grene,
On hunting ben they ridden really.
And to the grove, that stood ther faste by,
In which ther was an hart as men him told,
Duk Theseus the streite way hath hold.
And to the launde he rideth him ful right,
Ther was the hart ywont to have his flight,
And over a brooke, and so forth on his wey.
This duk wol have a cours at him or twey
With houndes, swiche as him lust to commaunde.
And when this duk was comen to the launde,
Under the sonne he loked, and anon
He was ware of Arcite and Palamon,
That foughten breme, as it were bolles two.
The brighte swerdes wenten to and fro
So hidously, that with the leste stroke
It semed that it wolde felle an oke.
But what they weren, nothing he ne wote.
This duk his courser with his sporres smote,
And at a stert he was betwix hem two,
And pulled out a swerd and cried, ho!

No more, up peine of lesing of your hed.
By mighty Mars, he shal anon be ded,
That smiteth any stroke, that I may sen.
But telleth me what mistere men ye ben,
That ben so hardy for to fighten here
Withouten any juge other officere,
As though it were in listes really.
This Palamon answered hastily,
And saide: Sire, what nedeth wordes mo?
We have the deth deserved bothe two.
Two woful wretches ben we, two caitives,
That ben accombred of our owen lives,
And as thou art a rightful lord and juge,
Ne yeve us neyther mercie ne refuge.
And sle me first, for seinte charitee.
But sle my felaw eke as wel as me.
Or sle him first; for, though thou know it lite,
This is thy mortal fo, this is Arcite,
That fro thy lond is banished on his hed,
For which he hath deserved to be ded.
For this is he that came unto thy gate
And sayde, that he highte Philostrate.
Thus hath he japed thee ful many a yere,
And thou hast maked him thy chief squiere,
And this is he, that loveth Emelie.
For sith the day is come that I shal die

I make plainly my confession,
That I am thilke woful Palamon,
That hath thy prison broken wilfully.
I am thy mortal fo, and it am I
That loveth so hot Emelie the bright,
That I wold dien present in hire sight.
Therfore I axe deth and my jewise.
But sle my felaw in the same wise,
For both we have deserved to be slain.
This worthy duk answerd anon again,
And sayd, This is a short conclusion.
Your owen mouth, by your confession
Hath damned you, and I wol it recorde.
It nedeth not to peine you with the corde.
Ye shul be ded by mighty Mars the rede.
The quene anon for veray womanhede
Gan for to wepe, and so did Emelie,
And all the ladies in the compagnie.
Gret pite was it, as it thought hem alle,
That ever swiche a chance shulde befalle.
For gentil men they were of gret estat,
And nothing but for love was this debat.
And sawe hir blody woundes wide and sore;
And alle criden bothe lesse and more,
Have mercie, Lord, upon us wimmen alle.
And on hir bare knees adoun they falle,

And wold have kist his feet ther as he stood,
Till at the last, aslaked was his mood;
(For pitee renneth sone in gentil herte)
And though he first for ire quoke and sterte,
He hath considered shortly in a clause
The trespas of hem both, and eke the cause:
And although that his ire hir gilt accused,
Yet in his reson he hem both excused;
As thus; he thoughte wel that every man
Wol helpe himself in love if that he can,
And eke deliver himself out of prison.
And eke his herte had compassion
Of wimmen, for they wepten ever in on:
And in his gentil herte he thoughte anon,
And soft unto himself he sayed: fie
Upon a lord that wol have no mercie,
But be a leon both in word and dede,
To hem that ben in repentance and drede,
As wel as to a proud dispitous man,
That wol mainteinen that he first began.
That lord hath litel of discretion,
That in swiche cas can no division:
But weigheth pride and humblesse after on.
And shortly, whan his ire is thus agon,
He gan to loken up with eyen light,
And spake these same wordes all on hight.

The god of love, a! *benedicite*,
How mighty and how grete a lord is he?
Again his might ther gainen non obstacles,
He may be cleped a God for his miracles.
For he can maken at his owen gise
Of everich herte, as that him list devise.
Lo here this Arcite, and this Palamon,
That quitely weren out of my prison,
And might have lived in Thebes really,
And weten I am hir mortal enemy,
And that hir deth lith in my might also,
And yet hath love, maugre hir eyen two,
Ybrought hem hither bothe for to die.
Now loketh, is not this an heigh folie?
Who maye ben a fool, but if he love?
Behold for Goddes sake that sitteth above,
Se how they blede! be they not wel araied?
Thus hath hir lord, the god of love, hem paied
Hir wages, and hir fees for hir service.
And yet they wenen for to be ful wise,
That serven love, for ought that may befalle.
And yet is this the beste game of alle,
That she, for whom they have this jolite,
Con hem therfore as mochel thank as me.
She wot no more of alle this hote fare
By God, than wot a cuckow or an hare.

But all mote ben assaied hote or cold;
A man mote ben a fool other yonge or old;
I wot it by myself ful yore agon:
For in my time a servant was I on.
And therfore sith I know of loves peine,
And wot how sore it can a man destreine,
As he that oft hath ben caught in his las,
I you foryeve all holly this trespas,
At request of the quene that kneleth here,
And eke of Emelie, my suster dere.
And ye shul bothe anon unto me swere,
That never mo ye shul my contree dere,
Ne maken werre upon me night ne day,
But ben my frendes in alle that ye may.
I you foryeve this trespas every del.
And they him sware his axing fayr and wel,
And him of lordship and of mercie praid,
And he hem granted grace, and thus he said:
To speke of real linage and richesse,
Though that she were a quene or a princesse,
Eche of you bothe is worthy douteles
To wedden whan time is, but natheles
I speke as for my suster Emelie,
For whom ye have this strif and jalousie,
Ye wot yourself, she may not wedden two
At ones, though ye fighten evermo:

But on of you, al be him loth or lefe,
He mot gon pipen in an ivy lefe:
This is to say, she may not have you bothe,
Al be ye never so jalous, ne so wrothe.
And forthy I you put in this degree,
That eche of you shall have his destinee,
As him is shape, and herkneth in what wise;
Lo here your ende of that I shal devise.
My will is this for plat conclusion
Withouten any replication,
If that you liketh, take it for the beste,
That everich of you shal gon wher him leste
Freely withouten raunson or dangere;
And this day fifty wekes, ferre ne nere,
Everich of you shal bring an hundred knightes,
Armed for listes up at alle rightes
Alle redy to darrein hire by bataille.
And this behete I you withouten faille
Upon my trouth, and as I am a knight,
That whether of you bothe hath that might,
This is to sayn, that whether he or thou
May with his hundred, as I spake of now,
Sle his contrary, or out of listes drive,
Him shall I yeven Emelie to wive,
To whom that fortune yeveth so fayr a grace.
The listes shal I maken in this place,

And God so wisly on my soule rewe,
As I shal even juge ben, and trewe.
Ye shal non other ende with me maken
That on of you ne shal be ded or taken.
And if you thinketh this is wel ysaid,
Saith your avis, and holdeth you apaid.
This is your ende, and your conclusion.
Who loketh lightly now but Palamon?
Who springeth up for joye but Arcite?
Who coud it tell, or who coud it endite,
The joye that is maked in the place
Whan Theseus hath don so fayre a grace?
But doun on knees went every manere wight,
And thanked him with all hir hertes might,
And namely these Thebanes often sith.
And thus with good hope and with herte blith
They taken hir leve, and homeward gan they ride
To Thebes, with his olde walles wide.
I trowe men wolde deme it negligence,
If I foryete to tellen the dispence
Of Theseus, that goth so besily
To maken up the listes really,
That swiche a noble theatre as it was,
I dare wel sayn, in all this world ther n'as.
The circuite a mile was aboute,
Walled of stone, and diched all withoute.

Round was the shape, in manere of a compas
Ful of degrees, the hight of sixty pas,
That whan a man was set on o degree
He letted not his felaw for to see.
Estward ther stood a gate of marbel white,
Westward right swiche another in th' opposite.
And shortly to concluden, swiche a place
Was never in erthe, in so litel a space,
For in the lond ther n'as no craftes man,
That geometrie, or arsmetrike can,
Ne portreiour, ne kerver of images,
That Theseus ne yaf him mete and wages
The theatre for to maken and devise.
And for to don his rite and sacrifice,
He estward hath upon the gate above,
In worship of Venus goddesse of love,
Don make an auter and an oratorie;
And westward in the minde and in memorie
Of Mars he maked hath right swiche another,
That coste largely of gold a fother.
And northward, in a touret on the wall,
Of alabastre white and red corall
An oratorie riche for to see,
In worship of Diane of chastitee,
Hath Theseus don wrought in noble wise.
But yet had I foryetten to devise

The noble kerving, and the portreitures,
The shape, the contenance of the figures
That weren in these oratories three.
First in the temple of Venus maist thou see
Wrought on the wall, ful pitous to beholde,
The broken slepes, and the sikes colde,
The sacred teres, and the waimentinges,
The firy strokes of the desiringes,
That loves servants in this lif enduren;
The othes, that hir covenants assuren.
Plesance and hope, desire, foolhardinesse,
Beaute and youthe, baudrie and richesse,
Charmes and force, lesinges and flaterie,
Dispence, besinesse, and jalousie,
That wered of yelwe goldes a gerlond,
And hadde a cuckow sitting on hire hond,
Festes, instruments, and caroles and dances,
Lust and array, and all the circumstances
Of love, which that I reken and reken shall,
By ordre weren peinted on the wall,
And mo than I can make of mention.
For sothly all the mount of Citheron,
Ther Venus hath hire principal dwelling,
Was shewed on the wall in portreying,
With all the gardin, and the lustinesse.
Nought was forgotten the porter idelnesse,

Ne Narcissus the fayre of yore agon,
Ne yet the folie of king Salomon,
Ne yet the grete strengthe of Hercules,
Th' enchantment of Medea and Circes,
Ne of Turnus the hardy fiers corage,
The riche Cresus caitif in servage.
Thus may ye seen, that wisdom ne richesse,
Beaute ne sleighte, strengthe ne hardinesse,
Ne may with Venus holden champartie,
For as hire liste the world may she gie.
Lo, all these folk so caught were in hire las
Til they for wo ful often said alas.
Sufficeth here ensamples on or two,
And yet I coude reken a thousand mo.
The statue of Venus glorious for to see
Was naked fleting in the large see,
And fro the navel doun all covered was
With wawes grene, and bright as any glas.
A citole in hire right hand hadde she,
And on hire hed, ful semely for to see,
A rose gerlond fressh, and wel smelling,
Above hire hed hire doves fleckering.
Before hire stood hire sone Cupido,
Upon his shoulders winges had he two;
And blind he was, as it is often sene;
A bow he bare and arwes bright and kene.

Why shulde I not as wel eke tell you all
The purtreiture, that was upon the wall
Within the temple of mighty Mars the rede?
All peinted was the wall in length and brede
Like to the estres of the grisly place,
That highte the gret temple of Mars in Trace,
In thilke colde and frosty region,
Ther as Mars hath his sovereine mansion.
First on the wall was peinted a forest,
In which ther wonneth neyther man ne best,
With knotty knarry barrein trees old
Of stubbes sharpe and hidous to behold;
In which ther ran a romble and a swough,
As though a storme shuld bresten every bough:
And dounward from an hill under a bent,
Ther stood the temple of Mars armipotent,
Wrought all of burned stele, of which th' entree
Was longe and streite, and gastly for to see.
And therout came a rage and swiche a vise,
That it made all the gates for to rise.
The northern light in at the dore shone,
For window on the wall ne was ther none,
Thurgh which men mighten any light discerne.
The dore was all of athamant eterne,
Yclenched overthwart and endelong
With yren tough, and for to make it strong,

Every piler the temple to sustene
Was tonne-gret, of yren bright and shene.
Ther saw I first the derke imagining
Of felonie, and alle the compassing;
The cruel ire, red as any glede,
The pikepurse, and eke the pale drede;
The smiler with the knif under the cloke,
The shepen brenning with the blake smoke;
The treson of the mordring in the bedde,
The open werre, with woundes all bebledde;
Conteke with blody knif, and sharp manace.
All full of chirking was that sory place.
The sleer of himself yet saw I there,
His herte-blood hath bathed all his here:
The naile ydriven in the shode on hight,
The colde deth, with mouth gaping upright.
Amiddes of the temple sate mischance,
With discomfort and sory contenance.
Yet saw I woodnesse laughing in his rage,
Armed complaint, outhees, and fiers outrage;
The carraine in the bush, with throte ycorven,
A thousand slain, and not of qualme ystorven;
The tirant, with the prey by force yraft;
The toun destroied, ther was nothing laft.
Yet saw I brent the shippes hoppesteres,
The hunte ystrangled with the wilde beres:

The sow freting the child right in the cradel;
The coke yscalled, for all his long ladel.
Nought was foryete by th' infortune of Marte
The carter overridden with his carte;
Under the wheel ful low he lay adoun.
  Ther were also of Martes division,
Th' armerer, and the bowyer, and the smith,
That forgeth sharpe swerdes on his stith.
And all above depeinted in a tour
Saw I conquest, sitting in gret honour,
With thilke sharpe swerd over his hed
Yhanging by a subtil twined thred.
Depeinted was the slaughter of Julius,
Of gret Nero, and of Antonius:
All be that thilke time they were unborne,
Yet was hir deth depeinted therbeforne,
By manacing of Mars, right by figure,
So was it shewed in that purtreiture
As is depeinted in the cercles above,
Who shal be slaine or elles ded for love.
Sufficeth on ensample in stories olde,
I may not reken hem alle, though I wolde.
  The statue of Mars upon a carte stood
Armed, and loked grim as he were wood,
And over his hed ther shinen two figures
Of sterres, that ben cleped in scriptures,

That on Puella, that other Rubeus.
This god of armes was araied thus:
A wolf ther stood beforne him at his fete
With eyen red, and of a man he ete:
With subtil pensil peinted was this storie,
In redouting of Mars and of his glorie.
Now to the temple of Diane the chaste
As shortly as I can I wol me haste,
To tellen you of the descriptioun,
Depeinted by the walles up and doun,
Of hunting and of shamefast chastitee.
Ther saw I how woful Calistope,
Whan that Diane agreved was with here,
Was turned from a woman til a bere,
And after was she made the lodesterre:
Thus was it peinted, I can say no ferre;
Hire sone is eke a sterre as men may see.
Ther saw I Dane yturned til a tree,
I mene not hire the goddesse Diane,
But Peneus daughter, which that highte Dane.
Ther saw I Atteon an hart ymaked,
For vengeance that he saw Diane all naked:
I saw how that his houndes have him caught,
And freten him, for that they knew him naught.
Yet peinted was a litel forthermore,
How Athalante hunted the wilde bore,

And Meleagre, and many another mo,
For which Diane wroughte hem care and wo.
Ther saw I many another wonder storie,
The which me liste not drawen to memorie.
This goddesse on an hart ful heye sete,
With smale houndes all aboute hire fete,
And undernethe hire feet she hadde a mone,
Wexing it was, and shulde wanen sone.
In gaudy grene hire statue clothed was,
With bow in hond, and arwes in a cas.
Hire eyen caste she ful low adoun,
Ther Pluto hath his derke regioun.
A woman travailling was hire beforne,
But for hire childe so longe was unborne
Ful pitously Lucina gan she call,
And sayed; helpe, for thou mayst beste of all.
Wel coude he peinten lifly that it wrought,
With many a florein he the hewes bought.
Now ben these listes made, and Theseus
That at his grete cost arraied thus
The temples, and the theatre everidel,
Whan it was don, him liked wonder wel.
But stint I wol of Theseus a lite,
And speke of Palamon and of Arcite.
The day approcheth of hir returning,
That everich shuld an hundred knightes bring,

The bataille to darreine, as I you told;
And til Athenes, hir covenant for to hold,
Hath everich of hem brought an hundred knightes,
Wel armed for the werre at alle rightes.
And sikerly ther trowed many a man,
That never, sithen that the world began,
As for to speke of knighthood of hir hond,
As fer as God hath maked see and lond,
N'as, of so fewe, so noble a compagnie.
For every wight that loved chevalrie,
And wold, his thankes, han a passant name,
Hath praied, that he might ben of that game,
And wel was him, that therto chosen was.
For if ther fell to-morwe swiche a cas,
Ye knowen wel, that every lusty knight,
That loveth *par amour*, and hath his might,
Were it in Englelond, or elleswher,
They wold, hir thankes, willen to be ther.
To fight for a lady, a! *benedicite*,
It were a lusty sighte for to se.
And right so ferden they with Palamon.
With him ther wenten knightes many on.
Som wol ben armed in an habergeon,
And in a brest plate, and in a gipon;
And som wol have a pair of plates large;
And som wol have a Pruce sheld, or a targe;

Som wol ben armed on his legges wele,
And have an axe, and som a mace of stele.
Ther n'is no newe guise, that it n'as old.
Armed they weren, as I have you told,
Everich after his opinion.
Ther maist thou se coming with Palamon
Licurge himself, the grete king of Trace:
Blake was his berd, and manly was his face.
The cercles of his eyen in his hed
They gloweden betwixen yelwe and red,
And like a griffon loked he about,
With kemped heres on his browes stout;
His limmes gret, his braunes hard and stronge,
His shouldres brode, his armes round and longe.
And as the guise was in his contree,
Ful highe upon a char of gold stood he,
With foure white bolles in the trais.
Instede of cote-armure on his harnais,
With nayles yelwe, and bright as any gold,
He hadde a beres skin, cole-blake for old.
His longe here was kempt behind his bak,
As any ravenes fether it shone for blake.
A wreth of gold arm-gret, of huge weight,
Upon his hed sate ful of stones bright,
Of fine rubins and of diamants.
About his char ther wenten white alauns,

Twenty and mo, as gret as any stere,
To hunten at the leon or the dere,
And folwed him, with mosel fast ybound,
Colered with gold, and torettes filed round.
An hundred lordes had he in his route
Armed full wel, with hertes sterne and stoute.
With Arcita, in stories as men find,
The gret Emetrius the king of Inde,
Upon a stede bay, trapped in stele,
Covered with cloth of gold diapred wele,
Came riding like the god of armes Mars.
His cote-armure was of a cloth of Tars,
Couched with perles, white, and round and grete.
His sadel was of brent gold new ybete;
A mantelet upon his shouldres hanging
Bret-ful of rubies red, as fire sparkling.
His crispe here like ringes was yronne,
And that was yelwe, and glitered as the sonne.
His nose was high, his eyen bright citrin,
His lippes round, his colour was sanguin,
A fewe fraknes in his face yspreint,
Betwixen yelwe and blake somdel ymeint,
And as a leon he his loking caste.
Of five and twenty yere his age I caste.
His berd was wel begonnen for to spring;
His vois was as a trompe thondering.

Upon his hed he wered of laurer grene
A gerlond fresshe and lusty for to sene.
Upon his hond he bare for his deduit
An egle tame, as any lily whit.
An hundred lordes had he with him there,
All armed save hir hedes in all hir gere,
Ful richely in alle manere thinges.
For trusteth wel, that erles, dukes, kinges
Were gathered in this noble compagnie,
For love, and for encrese of chevalrie.
About this king ther ran on every part
Ful many a tame leon and leopart.
And in this wise, these lordes all and some
Ben on the Sonday to the citee come
Abouten prime, and in the toun alight.
This Theseus, this duk, this worthy knight,
Whan he had brought hem into his citee,
And inned hem, everich at his degree,
He festeth hem, and doth so gret labour
To esen hem, and don hem all honour,
That yet men wenen that no mannes wit
Of non estat ne coud amenden it.
The minstralcie, the service at the feste,
The grete yeftes to the most and leste,
The riche array of Theseus paleis,
Ne who sate first ne last upon the deis,

What ladies fayrest ben or best dancing,
Or which of hem can carole best or sing,
Ne who most felingly speketh of love;
What haukes sitten on the perche above,
What houndes liggen on the floor adoun,
Of all this now make I no mentioun;
But of the effect; that thinketh me the beste;
Now cometh the point, and herkeneth if you leste.
The Sonday night, or day began to spring,
Whan Palamon the larke herde sing,
Although it n'ere not day by houres two,
Yet sang the larke, and Palamon right tho
With holy herte, and with an high corage
He rose, to wenden on his pilgrimage
Unto the blisful Citherea benigne,
I mene Venus, honourable and digne.
And in hire houre, he walketh forth a pas
Unto the listes, ther hire temple was,
And doun he kneleth, and with humble chere
And herte sore, he sayde as ye shul here.
Fayrest of fayre, o lady min Venus,
Daughter to Jove, and spouse of Vulcanus,
Thou glader of the mount of Citheron,
For thilke love thou haddest to Adon
Have pitee on my bitter teres smert,
And take myn humble praier at thin herte.

Alas! I ne have no langage to tell
The effecte, ne the torment of min hell;
Min herte may min harmes not bewrey;
I am so confuse, that I cannot say.
But mercy, lady bright, that knowest wele
My thought, and seest what harmes that I fele,
Consider all this, and rue upon my sore,
As wisly as I shall for evermore,
Emforth my might, thy trewe servant be,
And holden werre alway with chastite:
That make I min avow, so ye me helpe.
I kepe nought of armes for to yelpe,
Ne axe I nat to-morwe to have victorie,
Ne renoun in this cas, ne vaine glorie
Of pris of armes, blowen up and doun,
But I wold have fully possessioun
Of Emelie, and die in hire servise;
Find thou the manere how, and in what wise.
I rekke not, but it may better be,
To have victorie of hem, or they of me,
So that I have my lady in min armes.
For though so be that Mars is god of armes,
Your vertue is so grete in heven above,
That if you liste, I shal wel have my love.
Thy temple wol I worship evermo,
And on thin auter, wher I ride or go,

I wol don sacrifice, and fires bete.
And if ye wol not so, my lady swete,
Than pray I you, to-morwe with a spere
That Arcita me thurgh the herte bere.
Than rekke I not, whan I have lost my lif,
Though that Arcita win hire to his wif.
This is the effecte and ende of my praiere;
Yeve me my love, thou blisful lady dere.
Whan the orison was don of Palamon,
His sacrifice he did, and that anon,
Full pitously, with alle circumstances,
All tell I not as now his observances.
But at the last the statue of Venus shoke,
And made a signe, wherby that he toke,
That his praiere accepted was that day.
For though the signe shewed a delay,
Yet wist he wel that granted was his bone;
And with glad herte he went him home ful sone.
The thridde houre inequal that Palamon
Began to Venus temple for to gon,
Up rose the sonne, and up rose Emelie,
And to the temple of Diane gan hie.
Hire maydens, that she thider with hire ladde,
Ful redily with hem the fire they hadde,
Th'encense, the clothes, and the remenant all,
That to the sacrifice longen shall.

The hornes ful of mede, as was the gise,
Ther lakked nought to don hire sacrifise.
Smoking the temple, ful of clothes fayre,
This Emelie with herte debonaire
Hire body wesshe with water of a well.
But how she did hire rite I dare not tell;
But it be any thing in general;
And yet it were a game to heren all;
To him that meneth wel it n'ere no charge:
But it is good a man to ben at large.
Hire bright here kembed was, untressed all.
A coroune of a grene oke cerial
Upon hire hed was set ful fayre and mete.
Two fires on the auter gan she bete,
And did hire thinges, as men may behold
In Stace of Thebes, and these bokes old.
  Whan kindled was the fire, with pitous chere
Unto Diane she spake, as ye may here.
  O chaste goddesse of the wodes grene,
To whom both heven and erthe and see is sene,
Quene of the regne of Pluto, derke and lowe,
Goddesse of maydens, that min herte hast knowe
Ful many a yere, and wost what I desire,
As kepe me fro thy vengeance and thin ire,
That Atteon aboughte cruelly:
Chaste goddesse, wel wotest thou that I

Desire to ben a mayden all my lif,
Ne never wol I be no love ne wif.
I am (thou wost) yet of thy compagnie,
A mayde, and love hunting and venerie,
And for to walken in the wodes wilde,
And not to ben a wif, and be with childe.
Nought wol I knowen compagnie of man.
Now helpe me, lady, sith ye may and can,
For tho three formes that thou hast in thee.
And Palamon, that hath swiche love to me,
And eke Arcite, that loveth me so sore,
This grace I praie thee withouten more,
As sende love and pees betwix hem two:
And fro me torne away hir hertes so,
That all hir hote love, and hir desire,
And all hir besy torment, and hir fire
Be queinte, or torned in another place.
And if so be thou wolt not do me grace,
Or if my destinee be shapen so,
That I shall nedes have on of hem two,
As sende me him that most desireth me.
Behold, goddesse of clene chastite,
The bitter teres, that on my chekes fall.
Sin thou art mayde, and keper of us all,
My maydenhed thou kepe and wel conserve,
And while I live, a mayde I wol thee serve.

The fires brenne upon the auter clere,
While Emelie was thus in hire praiere:
But sodenly she saw a sighte queinte.
For right anon on of the fires queinte,
And quiked again, and after that anon
That other fire was queinte, and all agon:
And as it queinte, it made a whisteling,
As don these brondes wet in hir brenning.
And at the brondes ende outran anon
As it were blody dropes many on:
For which so sore agast was Emelie,
That she was wel neigh mad, and gan to crie,
For she ne wiste what it signified;
But only for the fere thus she cried,
And wept, that it was pitee for to here.
And therwithall Diane gan appere
With bowe in hond, right as an hunteresse,
And sayde; doughter, stint thin hevinesse.
Among the goddes highe it is affermed,
And by eterne word written and confermed,
Thou shalt be wedded unto on of tho,
That han for thee so mochel care and wo:
But unto which of hem I may not tell.
Farewel, for here I may no longer dwell.
The fires which that on min auter brenne,
Shal thee declaren er that thou go henne,

Thin aventure of love, as in this cas.
And with that word, the arwes in the cas
Of the goddesse clatteren fast and ring,
And forth she went, and made a vanishing,
For which this Emelie astonied was,
And sayde; what amounteth this, alas!
I putte me in thy protection,
Diane, and in thy disposition.
And home she goth anon the nexte way.
This is the effecte, ther n'is no more to say.
The nexte houre of Mars folwing this
Arcite unto the temple walked is
Of fierce Mars, to don his sacrifise
With all the rites of his payen wise.
With pitous herte and high devotion,
Right thus to Mars he sayde his orison.
O stronge god, that in the regnes cold
Of Trace honoured art, and lord yhold,
And hast in every regne and every lond
Of armes all the bridel in thin hond,
And hem fortunest as thee list devise,
Accept of me my pitous sacrifise.
If so be that my youthe may deserve,
And that my might be worthy for to serve
Thy godhed, that I may ben on of thine,
Than praie I thee to rewe upon my pine,

For thilke peine, and thilke hote fire,
In which thou whilom brendest for desire
Whanne that thou usedest the beautee
Of fayre yonge Venus, freshe and free,
And haddest hire in armes at thy wille:
Although thee ones on a time misfille,
Whan Vulcanus had caught thee in his las,
And fond the ligging by his wif, alas!
For thilke sorwe that was tho in thin herte,
Have reuthe as wel upon my peines smerte.
I am yonge and unkonning, as thou wost,
And, as I trow, with love offended most,
That ever was ony lives creature:
For she, that doth me all this wo endure,
Ne recceth never, whether I sinke or flete.
And wel I wot, or she me mercy hete,
I moste with strengthe win hire in the place:
And wel I wot, withouten helpe or grace
Of thee, ne may my strengthe not availle:
Than helpe me, lord, to-morwe in my bataille,
For thilke fire that whilom brenned thee,
As wel as that this fire now brenneth me;
And do, that I to-morwe may han victorie.
Min be the travaille, and thin be the glorie.
Thy soveraine temple wol I most honouren
Of ony place, and alway most labouren

In thy plesance and in thy craftes strong.
And in thy temple I wol my baner hong,
And all the armes of my compagnie,
And evermore, until that day I die,
Eterne fire I wol beforne thee finde,
And eke to this avow I wol me binde.
My berd, my here that hangeth long adoun,
That never yet felt non offension
Of rasour ne of shere, I wol thee yeve,
And ben thy trewe servant while I live.
Now, lord, have reuthe upon my sorwes sore,
Yeve me the victorie, I axe thee no more.
The praier stint of Arcita the stronge,
The ringes on the temple dore that honge,
And eke the dores clattereden ful faste,
Of which Arcita somwhat him agaste.
The fires brent upon the auter bright,
That it gan all the temple for to light;
A swete smell anon the ground up yaf,
And Arcita anon his hond up haf,
And more encense into the fire he cast,
With other rites mo, and at the last
The statue of Mars began his hauberke ring;
And with that soun he herd a murmuring
Ful low and dim, that sayde thus, Victorie.
For which he yaf to Mars honour and glorie.

And thus with joye, and hope wel to fare,
Arcite anon unto his inne is fare,
As fayn as foul is of the brighte sonne.
And right anon swiche strif ther is begonne
For thilke granting, in the heven above,
Betwixen Venus the goddesse of love,
And Mars the sterne god armipotent,
That Jupiter was besy it to stent:
Til that the pale Saturnus the colde,
That knew so many of aventures olde,
Fond in his olde experience and art,
That he ful sone hath plesed every part.
As sooth is sayd, elde hath gret avantage,
In elde is bothe wisdom and usage:
Men may the old out-renne, but not out-rede.
Saturne anon, to stenten strif and drede,
Al be it that it is again his kind,
Of all this strif he gan a remedy find.
My dere doughter Venus, quod Saturne,
My cours, that hath so wide for to turne,
Hath more power than wot any man.
Min is the drenching in the see so wan,
Min is the prison in the derke cote,
Min is the strangel and hanging by the throte,
The murmure, and the cherles rebelling,
The groyning, and the prive empoysoning.

I do vengeance and pleine correction,
While I dwell in the signe of the leon.
Min is the ruine of the highe halles,
The falling of the toures and of the walles
Upon the minour, or the carpenter:
I slew Sampson in shaking the piler.
Min ben also the maladies colde,
The derke tresons, and the castes olde:
My loking is the fader of pestilence.
Now wepe no more, I shal do diligence,
That Palamon, that is thin owen knight,
Shal have his lady, as thou hast him hight.
Thogh Mars shal help his knight yet natheles.
Betwixen you ther mot somtime be pees:
All be ye not of o complexion,
That causeth all day swiche division.
I am thin ayel, redy at thy will;
Wepe now no more, I shal thy lust fulfill.
Now wol I stenten of the goddes above,
Of Mars, and of Venus goddesse of love,
And tellen you as plainly as I can
The gret effect, for which that I began.
Gret was the feste in Athenes thilke day,
And eke the lusty seson of that May
Made every wight to ben in swiche plesance,
That all that monday justen they and dance,

And spenden it in Venus highe servise.
But by the cause that they shulden rise
Erly a-morwe for to seen the fight,
Unto hir reste wenten they at night.
And on the morwe whan the day gan spring,
Of hors and harneis noise and clattering
Ther was in the hostelries all aboute:
And to the paleis rode ther many a route
Of lordes, upon stedes and palfreis.
Ther mayst thou see devising of harneis
So uncouth and so riche, and wrought so wele
Of goldsmithry, of brouding, and of stele;
The sheldes brighte, testeres, and trappures;
Gold-hewen helmes, hauberkes, cote-armures;
Lordes in parementes on hir courseres,
Knightes of retenue, and eke squieres,
Nailing the speres, and helmes bokeling,
Gniding of sheldes, with lainers lacing;
Ther as nede is, they weren nothing idel:
The fomy stedes on the golden bridel
Gnawing, and fast the armureres also
With file and hammer priking to and fro;
Yemen on foot, and communes many on
With shorte staves, thicke as they may gon;
Pipes, trompes, nakeres, and clariounes,
That in the bataille blowen blody sounes;

The paleis ful of peple up and doun,
Here three, ther ten, holding hir questioun,
Devining of these Theban knightes two.
Som sayden thus, som sayde it shal be so;
Som helden with him with the blacke berd,
Som with the balled, som with the thick herd;
Som saide he loked grim, and wolde fighte:
He hath a sparth of twenty pound of wighte.
Thus was the halle full of devining
Long after that the sonne gan up spring.
The gret Theseus that of his slepe is waked
With minstralcie and noise that was maked,
Held yet the chambre of his paleis riche,
Til that the Theban knightes bothe yliche
Honoured were, and to the paleis fette.
Duk Theseus is at a window sette,
Araied right as he were a god in trone:
The peple preseth thiderward ful sone
Him for to seen, and don high reverence,
And eke to herken his heste and his sentence.
An heraud on a scaffold made an o,
Til that the noise of the peple was ydo:
And whan he saw the peple of noise al still,
Thus shewed he the mighty dukes will.
The lord hath of his high discretion
Considered, that it were destruction

To gentil blood, to fighten in the gise
Of mortal bataille now in this emprise:
Wherfore to shapen that they shul not die,
He wol his firste purpos modifie.
No man therfore, up peine of losse of lif,
No maner shot, ne pollax, ne short knif
Into the listes send, or thider bring.
Ne short swerd for to stike with point biting
No man ne draw, ne bere it by his side.
Ne no man shal unto his felaw ride
But o cours, with a sharpe ygrounden spere:
Foin if him list on foot, himself to were.
And he that is at meschief, shal be take,
And not slaine, but be brought unto the stake,
That shal ben ordeined on eyther side,
Thider he shal by force, and ther abide.
And if so fall, the chevetain be take
On eyther side, or elles sleth his make,
No longer shal the tourneying ylast.
God spede you; goth forth and lay on fast.
With longe swerd and with mase fighteth your fill.
Goth now your way; this is the lordes will.
The vois of the peple touched to the heven,
So loude crieden they with mery steven:
God save swiche a lord that is so good,
He wilneth no destruction of blood.

Up gon the trompes and the melodie,
And to the listes rit the compagnie
By ordinance, thurghout the cite large,
Hanged with cloth of gold, and not with sarge.
Ful like a lord this noble duk gan ride,
And these two Thebans upon eyther side:
And after rode the quene and Emelie,
And after that another compagnie
Of on and other, after hir degree.
And thus they passen thurghout the citee,
And to the listes comen they be time:
It n'as not of the day yet fully prime.
Whan set was Theseus ful rich and hie,
Ipolita the quene, and Emelie,
And other ladies in degrees aboute,
Unto the setes preseth all the route.
And westward, thurgh the gates under Mart,
Arcite, and eke the hundred of his part,
With baner red, is entred right anon;
And in the selve moment Palamon
Is, under Venus, estward in the place,
With baner white, and hardy chere and face.
In all the world, to seken up and doun,
So even without variatioun
Ther n'ere swiche compagnies never twey.
For ther was non so wise that coude sey,

That any hadde of other avantage
Of worthinesse, ne of estat, ne age,
So even were they chosen for to gesse.
And in two renges fayre they hem dresse.
Whan that hir names red were everich on,
That in hir nombre gile were ther non,
Tho were the gates shette, and cried was loude;
Do now your devoir, yonge knightes proude.
The heraudes left hir priking up and doun.
Now ringen trompes loud and clarioun.
Ther is no more to say, but est and west
In gon the speres sadly in the rest;
In goth the sharpe spore into the side.
Ther see men who can juste, and who can ride.
Ther shiveren shaftes upon sheldes thicke;
He feleth thurgh the herte-spone the pricke.
Up springen speres twenty foot on highte;
Out gon the swerdes as the silver brighte.
The helmes they to-hewen, and to-shrede;
Out brest the blod, with sterne stremes rede.
With mighty maces the bones they to-breste.
He thurgh the thickest of the throng gan threste.
Ther stomblen stedes strong, and doun goth all.
He rolleth under foot as doth a ball.
He foineth on his foo with a tronchoun,
And he him hurtleth with his hors adoun.

He thurgh the body is hurt, and sith ytake
Maugre his hed, and brought unto the stake,
As forword was, right ther he must abide.
Another lad is on that other side.
And somtime doth hem Theseus to rest,
Hem to refresh, and drinken if hem lest.
Ful oft a day han thilke Thebanes two
Togeder met, and wrought eche other wo:
Unhorsed hath eche other of hem twey.
Ther n'as no tigre in the vale of Galaphey,
Whan that hire whelpe is stole, whan it is lite,
So cruel on the hunt, as is Arcite
For jalous herte upon this Palamon:
Ne in Belmarie ther n'is so fell leon,
That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
Ne of his prey desireth so the blood,
As Palamon to sleen his foo Arcite.
The jalous strokes on hir helmes bite;
Out renneth blood on both hir sides rede.
Somtime an ende ther is of every dede.
For er the sonne unto the reste went,
The stronge king Emetrius gan hent
This Palamon, as he fought with Arcite,
And made his swerd depe in his flesh to bite.
And by the force of twenty is he take
Unyolden, and ydrawen to the stake.

And in the rescous of this Palamon
The stronge king Licurge is borne adoun:
And king Emetrius for all his strengthe
Is borne out of his sadel a swerdes lengthe,
So hitte him Palamon or he were take:
But all for nought, he was brought to the stake:
His hardy herte might him helpen naught,
He moste abiden, whan that he was caught,
By force, and eke by composition.
  Who sorweth now but woful Palamon?
That moste no more gon again to fight.
And whan that Theseus had seen that sight,
Unto the folk that foughten thus eche on,
He cried, ho! no more, for it is don.
I wol be trewe juge, and not partie.
Arcite of Thebes shal have Emelie,
That by his fortune hath hire fayre ywonne.
  Anon ther is a noise of peple begonne
For joye of this, so loud and high withall,
It semed that the listes shulden fall.
  What can now fayre Venus don above?
What saith she now? what doth this quene of love?
But wepeth so, for wanting of hire will,
Til that hire teres in the listes fill:
She sayde: I am ashamed doutelees.
  Saturnus sayde: Daughter, hold thy pees.

Mars hath his will, his knight hath all his bone,
And by min hed thou shalt ben esed sone.
The trompoures with the loude minstralcie,
The heraudes, that so loude yell and crie,
Ben in hir joye for wele of Dan Arcite.
But herkeneth me, and stenteth noise a lite,
Whiche a miracle ther befell anon.
This fierce Arcite hath of his helme ydon,
And on a courser for to shew his face
He priketh endelong the large place,
Loking upward upon this Emelie;
And she again him cast a frendlich eye,
(For women, as to speken in commune,
They folwen all the favour of fortune)
And was all his in chere, as his in herte.
Out of the ground a fury infernal sterte,
From Pluto sent, at requeste of Saturne,
For which his hors for fere gan to turne,
And lepte aside, and foundred as he lepe:
And er that Arcite may take any kepe,
He pight him on the pomel of his hed,
That in the place he lay as he were ded,
His brest to-brosten with his sadel bow.
As blake he lay as any cole or crow,
So was the blood yronnen in his face.
Anon he was yborne out of the place

With herte sore, to Theseus paleis.
Tho was he corven out of his harneis,
And in a bed ybrought ful fayre and blive,
For he was yet in memorie, and live,
And alway crying after Emelie.
Duk Theseus, with all his compagnie,
Is comen home to Athenes his citee,
With alle blisse and gret solempnite.
Al be it that this aventure was falle,
He n'olde not discomforten hem alle.
Men sayden eke, that Arcite shal not die,
He shal ben heled of his maladie.
And of another thing they were as fayn,
That of hem alle was ther non yslain,
Al were they sore yhurt, and namely on,
That with a spere was thirled his brest bone.
To other woundes, and to broken armes,
Som hadden salves, and som hadden charmes:
And fermacies of herbes, and eke save
They dronken, for they wold hir lives have.
For which this noble duk, as he wel can,
Comforteth and honoureth every man,
And made revel all the longe night,
Unto the strange lordes, as was right.
Ne ther n'as holden no discomforting,
But as at justes or a tourneying;

For sothly ther n'as no discomfiture,
For falling n'is not but an aventure.
Ne to be lad by force unto a stake
Unyolden, and with twenty knightes take,
O person all alone, withouten mo,
And haried forth by armes, foot, and too,
And eke his stede driven forth with staves,
With footmen, bothe yemen and eke knaves,
It was aretted him no vilanie:
Ther may no man clepen it cowardie.
For which anon duk Theseus let crie,
To stenten alle rancour and envie,
The gree as wel of o side as of other,
And eyther side ylike, as others brother:
And yave hem giftes after hir degree,
And helde a feste fully dayes three:
And conveyed the kinges worthily
Out of his toun a journee largely.
And home went every man the righte way,
Ther n'as no more, but farewel, have good day.
Of this bataille I wol no more endite,
But speke of Palamon and of Arcite.
  Swelleth the brest of Arcite, and the sore
Encreseth at his herte more and more.
The clotered blood, for any leche-craft,
Corrumpeth, and is in his bouke ylaft,

That neyther veine-blood, ne ventousing,
Ne drinke of herbes may ben his helping.
The vertue expulsif, or animal,
Fro thilke vertue cleped natural,
Ne may the venime voiden, ne expell.
The pipes of his longes gan to swell,
And every lacerte in his brest adoun
Is shent with venime and corruptioun.
Him gaineth neyther, for to get his lif,
Vomit upward, ne dounward laxatif;
All is to-brosten thilke region;
Nature hath now no domination.
And certainly ther nature wol not werche,
Farewel physike; go bere the man to cherche.
This is all and som, that Arcite moste die.
For which he sendeth after Emelie,
And Palamon, that was his cosin dere.
Than sayd he thus, as ye shuln after here.
  Nought may the woful spirit in myn herte
Declare o point of all my sorwes smerte
To you, my lady, that I love most;
But I bequethe the service of my gost
To you aboven every creature,
Sin that my lif ne may no lenger dure.
  Alas the wo! alas the peines stronge,
That I for you have suffered, and so longe!

Alas the deth! alas min Emelie!
Alas departing of our compagnie!
Alas min hertes quene! alas my wif!
Min hertes ladie, ender of my lif!
What is this world? what axen men to have?
Now with his love, now in his colde grave
Alone withouten any compagnie.
Farewel my swete, farewel min Emelie,
And softe take me in your armes twey,
For love of God, and herkeneth what I sey.
I have here with my cosin Palamon
Had strif and rancour many a day agon
For love of you, and for my jalousie.
And Jupiter so wis my soule gie,
To speken of a servant proprely,
With alle circumstances trewely,
That is to sayn, trouth, honour, and knighthede,
Wisdom, humblesse, estat, and high kinrede,
Fredom, and all that longeth to that art,
So Jupiter have of my soule part,
As in this world right now ne know I non,
So worthy to be loved as Palamon,
That serveth you, and wol don all his lif.
And if that ever ye shal ben a wif,
Foryete not Palamon, the gentil man.
And with that word his speche faille began.

For from his feet up to his brest was come
The cold of deth, that had him overnome.
And yet moreover in his armes two
The vital strength is lost, and all ago.
Only the intellect, withouten more,
That dwelled in his herte sike and sore,
Gan faillen, whan the herte felte deth;
Dusked his eyen two, and failled his breth.
But on his ladie yet cast he his eye;
His laste word was; Mercy, Emelie!
His spirit changed hous, and wente ther,
As I came never I cannot tellen wher.
Therfore I stent, I am no divinistre;
Of soules find I not in this registre.
Ne me lust not th' opinions to telle
Of hem, though that they writen wher they dwelle.
Arcite is cold, ther Mars his soule gie.
Now wol I speken forth of Emelie.
Shright Emelie, and houleth Palamon,
And Theseus his sister toke anon
Swouning, and bare hire from the corps away.
What helpeth it to tarien forth the day,
To tellen how she wep both even and morwe?
For in swiche cas wimmen have swiche sorwe,
Whan that hir housbonds ben fro hem ago,
That for the more part they sorwen so,

Or elles fallen in swiche maladie,
That atte laste certainly they die.
Infinite ben the sorwes and the teres
Of olde folk, and folk of tendre yeres,
In all the toun for deth of this Theban:
For him ther wepeth bothe childe and man.
So gret a weping was ther non certain,
Whan Hector was ybrought, all fresh yslain
To Troy, alas! the pitee that was there,
Cratching of chekes, rending eke of here.
Why woldest thou be ded? this women crie,
And haddest gold ynough, and Emelie.
No man might gladen this duk Theseus,
Saving his olde fader Egeus,
That knew this worldes transmutatioun,
As he had seen it chaungen up and doun,
Joye after wo, and wo after gladnesse;
And shewed him ensample and likenesse.
Right as ther died never man (quod he)
That he ne lived in erthe in som degree,
Right so ther lived never man (he seyd)
In all this world, that somtime he ne deyd.
This world n'is but a thurghfare ful of wo,
And we ben pilgrimes, passing to and fro:
Deth is an end of every worldes sore.

And over all this yet said he mochel more
To this effect, ful wisely to enhort
The peple, that they shuld hem recomfort.
Duk Theseus with all his besy cure
He casteth now, wher that the sepulture
Of good Arcite may best ymaked be,
And eke most honourable in his degree.
And at the last he toke conclusion,
That ther as first Arcite and Palamon
Hadden for love the bataille hem betwene,
That in that selve grove, sote and grene,
Ther as he hadde his amorous desires,
His complaint, and for love his hote fires,
He wolde make a fire, in which the office
Of funeral he might all accomplise;
And lete anon commande to hack and hewe
The okes old, and lay hem on a rew
In culpons, wel araied for to brenne.
His officers with swifte feet they renne
And ride anon at his commandement.
And after this, this Theseus hath sent
After a bere, and it all overspradde
With cloth of gold, the richest that he hadde;
And of the same suit he cladde Arcite.
Upon his hondes were his gloves white,

Eke on his hed a croune of laurer grene,
And in his hond a swerd ful bright and kene.
He laid him bare the visage on the bere,
Therwith he wept that pitee was to here.
And for the peple shulde seen him alle,
Whan it was day he brought him to the halle,
That roreth of the crying and the soun.
Tho came this woful Theban Palamon
With flotery berd, and ruggy asshy heres,
In clothes blake, ydropped all with teres,
And (passing over of weping Emelie)
The reufullest of all the compagnie.
And in as much as the service shuld be
The more noble and riche in his degree,
Duk Theseus let forth three stedes bring,
That trapped were in stele all glittering,
And covered with the armes of Dan Arcite.
And eke upon these stedes gret and white
Ther saten folk, of which on bare his sheld,
Another his spere up in his hondes held;
The thridde bare with him his bow Turkeis,
Of brent gold was the cas and the harneis:
And riden forth a pas with sorweful chere
Toward the grove, as ye shul after here.
The noblest of the Grekes that ther were

Upon hir shuldres carrieden the bere,
With slacke pas, and eyen red and wete,
Thurghout the citee, by the maister strete,
That sprad was all with black, and wonder hie
Right of the same is all the strete ywrie.
Upon the right hand went olde Egeus,
And on that other side duk Theseus,
With vessels in hir hond of gold ful fine,
All ful of hony, milk, and blood, and wine;
Eke Palamon, with ful gret compagnie:
And after that came woful Emelie,
With fire in hond, as was that time the gise,
To don the office of funeral service.
  High labour, and ful gret apparailling
Was at the service of that fire making,
That with his grene top the heven raught,
And twenty fadom of brede the armes straught:
This is to sain, the boughes were so brode.
Of stre first ther was laied many a lode.
  But how the fire was maked up on highte,
And eke the names how the trees highte,
As oke, fir, birch, aspe, alder, holm, poplere,
Wilow, elm, plane, ash, box, chestein, lind, laurere,
Maple, thorn, beche, hasel, ew, whipultre,
How they were feld, shal not be told for me;

Ne how the goddes rannen up and doun
Disherited of hir habitatioun,
In which they woneden in rest and pees,
Nimphes, Faunes, and Amadriades;
Ne how the bestes, and the briddes alle
Fledden for fere, whan the wood gan falle;
Ne how the ground agast was of the light,
That was not wont to see the sonne bright;
Ne how the fire was couched first with stre,
And than with drie stickes cloven a-thre,
And than with grene wood and spicerie,
And than with cloth of gold and with perrie,
And gerlonds hanging with ful many a flour,
The mirre, th'encense also with swete odour;
Ne how Arcita lay among all this,
Ne what richesse about his body is;
Ne how that Emelie, as was the gise,
Put in the fire of funeral service;
Ne how she swouned whan she made the fire,
Ne what she spake, ne what was hir desire;
Ne what jewelles men in the fire caste,
Whan that the fire was gret and brente faste;
Ne how som cast hir sheld, and som hir spere,
And of hir vestimentes, which they were,
And cuppes full of wine, and milk, and blood,

Into the fire, that brent as it were wood;
Ne how the Grekes with a huge route
Three times riden all the fire aboute
Upon the left hond, with a loud shouting,
And thries with hir speres clatering;
And thries how the ladies gan to crie;
Ne how that led was homeward Emelie;
Ne how Arcite is brent to ashen cold;
Ne how the liche-wake was yhold
All thilke night, ne how the Grekes play.
The wake-plaies ne kepe I not to say:
Who wrestled best naked, with oile enoint,
Ne who that bare him best in no disjoint.
I woll not tellen eke how they all gon
Home til Athenes whan the play is don;
But shortly to the point now wol I wende,
And maken of my longe tale an ende.

By processe and by lengthe of certain yeres
All stenten is the mourning and the teres
Of Grekes, by on general assent.
Than semeth me ther was a parlement
At Athenes, upon certain points and cas:
Amonges the which points yspoken was
To have with certain contrees alliance,
And have of Thebanes fully obeisance.

For which this noble Theseus anon
Let senden after gentil Palamon,
Unwist of him, what was the cause and why:
But in his blacke clothes sorwefully
He came at his commandement on hie;
Tho sente Theseus for Emelie.

Whan they were set, and husht was al the place,
And Theseus abiden hath a space,
Or any word came from his wise brest
His eyen set he ther as was his lest,
And with a sad visage he siked still,
And after that right thus he sayd his will.

The firste mover of the cause above
Whan he firste made the fayre chaine of love,
Gret was th'effect, and high was his entent;
Wel wist he why, and what therof he ment:
For with that fayre chaine of love he bond
The fire, the air, the watre, and the lond
In certain bondes, that they may not flee:
That same prince and mover eke (quod he)
Hath stablisht, in this wretched world adoun,
Certain of dayes and duration
To all that are engendred in this place,
Over the which day they ne mow not pace,
Al mow they yet dayes wel abrege.

Ther nedeth non autoritee allege,
For it is preved by experience,
But that me lust declaren my sentence.
Than may men by this ordre wel discerne,
That thilke mover stable is and eterne.
Wel may men knowen, but it be a fool,
That every part deriveth from his hool.
For nature hath not taken his beginning
Of no partie ne cantel of a thing,
But of a thing that parfit is and stable,
Descending so, til it be corrumpable.
And therfore of his wise purveyance
He hath so wel beset his ordinance,
That speces of thinges and progressions
Shullen enduren by successions,
And not eterne, withouten any lie:
This maiest thou understand and seen at eye.
Lo the oke, that hath so long a norishing
Fro the time that it ginneth first to spring,
And hath so long a lif, as ye may see,
Yet at the laste wasted is the tree.
Considereth eke, how that the harde stone
Under our feet, on which we trede and gon,
It wasteth, as it lieth by the wey.
The brode river somtime wexeth drey.

The grete tounes see we wane and wende.
Than may ye see that all thing hath an ende.
Of man and woman see we wel also,
That nedes in on of the termes two,
That is to sayn, in youthe or elles age,
He mote be ded, the king as shall a page;
Som in his bed, som in the depe see,
Som in the large feld, as ye may see:
Ther helpeth nought, all goth that ilke wey:
Than may I sayn that alle thing mote dey.
What maketh this but Jupiter the king?
The which is prince, and cause of alle thing,
Converting alle unto his propre wille,
From which it is derived, soth to telle.
And here-againes no creature on live
Of no degree availleth for to strive.
Than is it wisdom, as it thinketh me,
To maken vertue of necessite,
And take it wel, that we may not eschewe,
And namely that to us all is dewe.
And who so grutcheth ought, he doth folie,
And rebel is to him that all may gie.
And certainly a man hath most honour
To dien in his excellence and flour,
Whan he is siker of his goode name.

Than hath he don his frend, ne him, no shame;
And glader ought his frend ben of his deth,
Whan with honour is yolden up his breth,
Than whan his name appalled is for age;
For all foryetten is his vassallage.
Than is it best, as for a worthy fame,
To dien whan a man is best of name.
The contrary of all this is wilfulnesse.
Why grutchen we? why have we hevinesse,
That good Arcite, of chivalry the flour,
Departed is, with dutee and honour,
Out of this foule prison of this lif?
Why grutchen here his cosin and his wif
Of his welfare, that loven him so wel?
Can he hem thank? nay, God wot, never a del,
That both his soule, and eke hemself offend,
And yet they mow hir lustes not amend.
What may I conclude of this longe serie,
But after sorwe I rede us to be merie,
And thanken Jupiter of all his grace.
And er that we departen from this place,
I rede that we make of sorwes two
O parfit joye lasting evermo:
And loketh now wher most sorwe is herein,
Ther wol I firste amenden and begin.

Sister, (quod he) this is my full assent,
With all th'avis here of my parlement,
That gentil Palamon, your owen knight,
That serveth you with will, and herte, and might,
And ever hath don, sin ye first him knew,
That ye shall of your grace upon him rew,
And taken him for husbond and for lord:
Lene me your hand, for this is oure accord.
Let see now of your womanly pitee.
He is a kinges brothers sone pardee,
And though he were a poure bachelere,
Sin he hath served you so many a yere,
And had for you so gret adversite,
It moste ben considered, leveth me.
For gentil mercy oweth to passen right.
Than sayd he thus to Palamon the knight;
I trow ther nedeth litel sermoning
To maken you assenten to this thing.
Cometh ner, and take your lady by the hond.
Betwixen hem was maked anon the bond,
That highte matrimoine or mariage,
By all the conseil of the baronage.
And thus with alle blisse and melodie
Hath Palamon ywedded Emelie.
And God that all this wide world hath wrought,
Send him his love, that hath it dere ybought.

For now is Palamon in alle wele, 3103
Living in blisse, in richesse, and in hele,
And Emelie him loveth so tendrely,
And he hire serveth al so gentilly,
That never was ther no word hem betwene
Of jalousie, ne of non other tene.
Thus endeth Palamon and Emelie;
And God save all this fayre compagnie. 3110

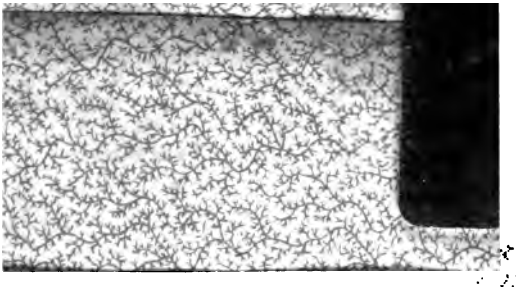


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7





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